UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
3 1761 01542339 5

Allan Ramsay

Engraved by R. Bell. From a Painting by Allan Ramsay Junr.

THE WORKS

OF

ALLAN RAMSAY

VOL. I.

Ramsay's House Castle Hill

EDINBURGH

A.Fullarton & Co London & Edinburgh

THE

WORKS

OF

ALLAN RAMSAY.

WITH LIFE OF THE AUTHOR

BY GEORGE CHALMERS;

AND AN

ESSAY ON HIS GENIUS AND WRITINGS

BY LORD WOODHOUSELEE.

VOL. I.

122704
20 6 12

LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND DUBLIN:
A. FULLARTON AND CO.

1848.

PR
3657
A1
1848
v.1

EDINBURGH:
FULLARTON AND CO., PRINTERS, LEITH WALK.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME FIRST.

Page

Publishers' Advertisement, ... 6
Mr. Chalmers's Advertisement, ... 7
The Life of Allan Ramsay, ... 9
Essay on the Genius and Writings of Ramsay, . . . 47

VERSES TO THE AUTHOR.

From Josiah Burchet, ... 117
From C. T. 120
From C. Beckingham, ... 121
From James Ardbuckle, ... 121
From Meston, ... 123

SERIOUS POEMS.

To the Critics, ... 127
Tartana; or the Plaid, ... 128
The City of Edinburgh's Address to the Country, . . 140
On the Preservation of Mr. Bruce and his School-fellows, 144
On Content, ... 145
The City of Edinburgh's Salutation to the Marquis of Carnarvon, ... 160
On the Prospect of Plenty: a Poem on the North-Sea Fishery, ... 163
On the Eclipse of the Sun, April, 1715, ... 171
The Gentleman's Qualifications debated, ... 173
On Friendship, ... 175
The Author's Address to the Town-council of Edinburgh, 175
The Petition to the Whin-bush Club 177
Spoken to Æolus. in the House of Marlefield, on the night of a violent Wind, ... 179

Page
Clyde's Welcome to his Prince, ... 179
On the Marquis of Bowmont's cutting off his Hair, . 182
To some young Ladies, ... 183
The Poet's Wish, ... 185
Health: a Poem inscribed to the Earl of Stair, . . 186
An Ode on the Birth of the Marquis of Drumlanrig, . 199
An Ode to Grace, the Countess of Aboyne, on her Marriage Day, ... 201
An Ode on the Marriage of Alexander Brodie of Brodie, to Miss Mary Sleigh, ... 203
The Fair Assembly, ... 205
On the Royal Archers; shooting for the Bowl, the 6th of July, 1724, ... 213
On the Royal Archers; marching under the Duke of Hamilton to shoot for the Arrow, the 4th of August, 1724, 216
The Poet's Thanks to the Archers on being admitted into their Royal Company, ... 219
On seeing the Archers diverting themselves at the Butts and Rovers, ... 220
An Ode to the Earl of Hartford and the rest of the members of the Society of British Antiquaries, . . . 225
Advice to Mr. ——— on his Marriage, ... 229
An Anacreontic on Love, ... 230
An Address of the Muse to George Drummond the Lord Provost, and to the Town-council of Edinburgh, . 231
To Alexander Murray of Broughton on his Marriage, . 237
An Ode on the falling of a Slate from a House on the Breast of Mrs. M—— M——, ... 238
The Vision, ... 239
An Ode: Allan Ramsay to his Son, on his painting Captain James Forrester, ... 251

ELEGIAC POEMS.

An Ode to the Memory of Lady Margaret Anstruther, . 255
An Elegy on James Lord Carnegie, ... 257
An Ode sacred to the Memory of Ann Lady Garlies, . 259
To Sir John Clerk, on the death of his Son John Clerk, Esq., ... 261
An Elegy on the Death of Robert Alexander of Blackhouse, 264
An Inscription on the Tomb of Alexander Wardlaw, . 265

Page
An Ode sacred to the Memory of Anne Duchess of Hamilton, ... 265
An Ode to the Memory of Sir Isaac Newton, . . 268
An Ode to the Memory of Mrs. Forbes of Newhall, . 270

COMIC POEMS.

The Morning Interview, ... 275
The Thimble, ... 284
An Elegy on Maggy Johnstoun, ... 287
An Elegy on John Cowper, ... 291
An Elegy on Lucky Wood, ... 295
An Elegy on Patie Birnie, ... 299
Christ's Kirk on the Green, Canto I, ... 304
Canto II., ... 317
Canto III., ... 325
On Wit: The Tale of the Manting Lad, . . . 333
A Prologue spoken at the acting of the Orphan and the Cheats of Scapin by some young Gentlemen, in 1719, . 335
An Epilogue after the acting of the Drummer, . . 336
A Prologue spoken by Anthony Aston, the first night of his acting in Winter, 1726, ... 337
A Prologue before the acting of Aurenzebe, in 1727, . 338
An Epilogue spoken after acting the Orphan and the Gentle Shepherd, in January 1729, ... 339

PUBLISHERS' ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present edition of Allan Ramsay's Poetical Works is a careful reprint of the edition edited by Mr. George Chalmers, and published by Cadell and Davies, in two vols. 8vo., in 1800; with some alterations in the punctuation of that edition, which is peculiar, and with the addition of one or two pieces which have been traced to the authorship of Ramsay, and a few illustrative and explanatory Notes which are distinguished by an asterisk as well as by being placed within brackets.

EDINBURGH, *June* 1*st*, 1848.

MR. CHALMERS'S ADVERTISEMENT.

In offering this edition of the Poems of Ramsay to the world, the publishers beg leave to submit what they hope will be allowed to give this a preference to any former edition.

Some poems have been now added which had escaped the diligence of former collectors; and the whole book has been thrown into a new, and, they trust, a better arrangement.

They have endeavoured to ornament this edition with such embellishments as they presumed would be welcome to every reader. There is prefixed a portrait of the author, which has been finely engraved by Mr. Ryder, from a drawing which was made by Allan Ramsay, the poet's son; the original of which is now in the possession of A. F. Tytler, Esq. of Edinburgh. There is added, as a tail-piece, (1) an engraving of the rustic temple which has been dedicated by that gentleman,—who happily possesses the supposed scene of 'The Gentle Shepherd,'—to the place, and poet. Curiosity must na-

(1) [* Given as a separate illustration.]

turally be gratified by the accurate *fac simile* of the hand-writing of such an author, which is now first presented to the public.

It is understood that Allan Ramsay, the painter, left some account of his father for publication; but it is hoped that the public will be full as well pleased with the perusal of the Life of the Author, and the Remarks on his Poems, which have been written by the neutral pen of a stranger.

THE LIFE OF

ALLAN RAMSAY.

While History employs her peculiar powers in developing the intrigues of statesmen, in adjusting the disputes of nations, and in narrating the events of war,—Biography busies her analogous pen in tracing the progress of letters, in ascertaining the influence of manners, and in appreciating literary characters. The pursuits of History must be allowed to be most dignified; the employment of Biography is most pleasing. It is the business of History to record truth, and to inculcate wisdom; it is the duty of Biography to pay just tributes of respect and praise, to genius, to knowledge, and to virtue.

In every age, and in every nation, individuals have arisen, whose talents and labours merited the notice and the remembrance of the biographer; although in some periods, and among some tribes, the tumults of barbarity allowed little leisure or security for collecting anecdotes, and arranging documents, had learning existed to record and detail them. Among other civilized nations, North Britain has produced her full share of genius to be admired, of knowledge to be learned, and of virtue to be imitated. It has, however, been conceived by ignorance, and asserted by dogmatism, that Scotland did not produce, in the century which elapsed in 1715, any person, except Burnet, who is worthy of biographical no-

tice; although in fact she did produce, in that period, men who were distinguished for their jurisprudence,(1)—for their science and learning,(2)—for their bravery,(3)—and for their wit.(4) It was also in that century which was thus branded by malignity for its infertility of talents, Scotland produced, during a happy moment, Allan Ramsay, her Doric poet; who claims the notice of Biography because he raised himself to distinction by his talents, and pleased others by the perusal of his poetry, while he derived a benefit to himself by his powers of pleasing.

A zealous genealogist could easily trace Ramsay to the family of the Earl of Dalhousie. His father was Robert Ramsay, who inherited as it were the management of Lord Hoptoun's lead-mines in Crawford-moor. His grandfather was Robert Ramsay, a writer in Edinburgh, who had the management of the same mines. His great-grandfather was Captain John Ramsay, the son of Ramsay of Cockpen, who was a brother of Ramsay of Dalhousie. Of this genealogy our poet speaks proudly, when he recollects

> "Dalhousie of an auld descent,
> My chief, my stoup, my ornament."

His mother was Alice Bower, whose father had been brought from Derbyshire to instruct Lord Hoptoun's miners in their art. His grandmother was Janet Douglas, a daughter of Douglas of Muthil; and our bard was careful to remember, with the exultation of genius, that

(1) The Lord-president Lockhart, the Lord-president Gilmour, the Lord-president Stair.

(2) James Gregory was born in 1639; David Gregory, in 1661; John Keil, in 1670; James Keil, in 1673; Colin M'Laurin, in 1698.—"The Latin Poetry of '*Deliciæ Poetarum Scotorum*,'" says Johnson, "would have done honour to any country."—At the end of the seventeenth century followed Ruddiman.

(3) The Marquis of Montrose, and Lord Dundee.

(4) Dr. Pitcairn, and Dr. Arbuthnot.

"He was a poet sprung from a Douglas loin."

He was born on the 15th of October 1686, in the Upper ward of Lanarkshire. Ramsay has himself described the place of his birth with picturesque minuteness:

"Of Craufurd-moor, born in Lead-hill,
Where mineral springs Glengonir fill,
Which joins sweet flowing Clyde,
Between auld Crawfurd-Lindsay's towers,
And where Deneetnie rapid pours
His stream through Glotta's tide."(1)

The learned minister who writes the account of the parish of Crawford-moor,(2) claims no peculiar honour from the birth of Ramsay in that mountainous district. In these wilds did our bard remain during fifteen years, deriving from the parish-schoolmaster such lore as he possessed, and learning from experience,

"How halesome 'tis to snuff the cawler air,
And all the sweets it bears, when void of care."

But this felicity did not last long. His first misfortune consisted in losing, while he was yet an infant, his father, who died before he had himself passed his five-and-twentieth year; and his next unhappiness arose from the marriage of his mother, soon after the death of his father, to Mr. Crighton, one of the very small landholders of the country which is occupied by the great families of Hamilton and Douglas. These sad events left Ramsay without property, or the means of procuring any. And while Scotland was not yet busied with manufactures, nor enriched by commerce, the best resource which occurred to his relations, who had other

(1) 'Petition to the Whin-bush club.'
(2) [* In the old Statistical Account of Scotland.]

objects of affection, was to bind him an apprentice to a wig-maker.(1)

With this design, Ramsay was sent to Edinburgh in 1701, during the fifteenth year of his age. Had he behaved amiss as an apprentice, we should have heard of his misconduct, when he was attacked as a writer, by those who spared none of the asperities of reproach. The silence of a satirical enemy an author may well enjoy as praise.

Ramsay was now to enter into life, with an honest trade and a fair character, for his livelihood. And he was induced, as much by his sociability of temper as by the example of other citizens, to marry, in 1712, Christian Ross, the daughter of an inferior lawyer (2) in Edinburgh. In the subsequent year, she brought him his

(1) Some writers have said that Ramsay was a barber, because he was a wig-maker; considering the two trades as coincident in that age. That Ramsay, when he entered life, was a wig-maker, is certain from his frequent admissions, and from the parish-register which records the baptism of his children, and which calls him a periwig-maker, in 1713, in 1714, in 1715, and in 1716. [* See p. 41, *post.*] He was a burgess of Edinburgh, not by birth, but by service as an apprentice to a wig-maker:

> "Born to nae lairdship, mair's the pity!
> Yet denison of this fair city."

There are neither facts nor circumstances which intimate that he was a barber. On the other hand, the satirists,—who were studious to collect every topic of degradation, when facts were known,—never call him a barber. The wig-makers do not form any of the forty-two corporations of that city. *Maitland's Hist. Ed.* 313, 14.—When the surgeons and barbers were jointly incorporated in 1505, it was established, as a bye-law, that none shall act as a barber who was not free of that craft. *Ib.* 297.—In 1682, the surgeons threw off the barbers, who, however, remained dependant on them till 1722; but the town-council recommended to the surgeons to supply the citizens with a sufficient number of qualified persons to shave and cut hair. *Ib.* 296.—In 1722, the barbers were separated from the surgeons, and formed into a corporate body with exclusive privileges. *Ib.* 313, 14.—The investigation of this point is of no other importance than that it is always interesting to detect error, and ever pleasing to propagate truth.

(2) [* By this expression, the reader is only to understand that our poet's father-in-law was a member of one of the inferior grades of the legal profession.]

eldest son Allan, who inherited his father's genius, and rose to eminence both as a painter and a scholar. For several years, she brought him a child every twelvemonth; a fruitfulness this of which the poet delighted to boast. The same disposition for sociability prompted him to court the society of clubs, during a clubical period. Among his poems he has left a petition for admittance into the Whin-bush club, a society of gentlemen of Lanarkshire, who met partly to enjoy the pleasure of mirth, perhaps as much to exercise the beneficence of charity to indigent persons of the same shire. The petitioner founds his claim on the place of his nativity:

> "By birth my title's fair,
> To bend wi' ye, and spend wi' ye
> An evening, and gaffaw."

Our poet's passion for "gaffaw," or social laughter, has induced malignant witticism to speak of Ramsay as "a convivial buffoon."(1)

It was an age of clubs when Ramsay began to enter into life, with a strong desire to give and to receive the pleasures of conviviality. In May 1712, there was established at Edinburgh the Easy club, consisting of young men, who possessed talents and vivacity, and who wished to pass stated evenings in free conversation and social mirth. Of this club, Ramsay appears to have been an original member;(2) and as the fundamental constitution of it required that each member should assume some characteristic name, he chose—though I know not with what propriety—the well-known appellation of Isaac Bickerstaff. After a while, the Easy club, affecting great independence, resolved to adopt Scottish patrons in place of English names. Ramsay now chose for his new deno-

(1) Ancient Scottish Poems, 1786, vol. i. p. 132.
(2) I quote the MS. transactions of the Easy club.

mination the more poetical name of Gawin Douglas. Our representative of the learned Bishop of Dunkeld, the Scottish translator of Virgil, occasionally amused the club with appropriate poetry; and, on the 2d of February 1715, he was chosen poet-laureat to the club, whose hilarity, however, was suppressed by the rebellion of 1715. One of its last acts, on the 12th of May, was to declare, "that Dr. Pitcairn, and Gawin Douglas [Ramsay], having behaved themselves three years as good members of this club, were adjudged to be gentlemen."(1) From this declaration, we may easily perceive—what is indeed apparent on their recorded transactions—that Ramsay regarded his attendance on the club as part of the business of life; while his associates, as they were young, had their studies to prosecute and their establishments to form.

As a juvenile poet, Ramsay has left nothing which could bring to our recollection the infantine performances of Cowley, Milton, or Pope, who "lisped in numbers" at the dawn of life. Ramsay only began to read poetry in his twentieth year,—to feel the influences of emulation, and to lay the foundation of his fame and fortune.(2)

(1) MS. transactions of the Easy club. [* See the verses entitled 'The Gentleman's qualifications debated,' p. 173, *post.*]

(2) In one of his epistles to Hamilton of Gilbertfield, Ramsay tells him:

> "When I begoud first to cun verse,
> And cou'd your 'Ardry Whins' rehearse,
> Where bonny Heck ran fast and fierce,
> It warm'd my breast;
> Then emulation did me pierce,
> Whilk since ne'er ceast.

'The last dying words of bonny Heck,' a famous greyhound, which was written by "Wanton Willie," the poet just mentioned, was first published in 1706, in the 'Choice Collection of Scots Poems' by Watson. As Ramsay was born in 1686, he was now twenty. It is curious to remark, that the 'Epitaph on Habbie Simpson,' which was published by Watson in the same collection, was deemed by Ramsay, when he began to read poetry,

He first began to write in 1711. For in his letter to Smibert, the painter, he says,

"Frae twenty-five to five-and-forty,
My muse was neither sweer nor dorty."

Yet his earliest production which is at present known, was presented by him, in 1712, to 'The most happy members of the Easy club:'—

"Were I but a prince or king,
I'd advance ye! I'd advance ye!
Were I but a prince or king,
So highly 's I'd advance ye!
Great sense and wit are ever found
'Mong you always for to abound;
Much like the orbs that still move round,
No ways constrain'd, but easy,
Were I, &c.

"Most of what's hid from vulgar eye,—
Even from earth's centre to the sky,—
Your brighter thoughts do clearly spy,
Which makes you wise and easy.
Were I, &c.

the standard of perfection; for he praised his correspondent Hamilton, as having, in his poetical performances,

——"hit the spirit to a tittle,
Of standart Habby."

The reading of Ramsay was soon extended to the poetry of very different masters,—of Dryden and Addison, of Prior and Pope. When the noblest version of the Iliad appeared, in 1718, Ramsay read it over thrice; and thereupon addressed an ode to Pope, which was no doubt welcome to a mind that was not insensible to flattery; and which discreetly concluded,—

"Henceforward I'll not tempt my fate
On dazzling rays to stare,
Lest I should tine dear self-conceit,
And read and write nae mair."

It is easy to trace in the poetry of Ramsay how much he improved his original powers by such poetical studies. We may see, in some of his English pieces, after "he had three times read the Iliad o'er," a facility of versification, and a flow of numbers, which Ramsay owed to the school of Pope.

"Apollo's self unknown attends,
And in good humour re-ascends
The forkt Parnassus, and commends
You for being blyth and easy.
Were I, &c.

"All faction in the church or state,
With greater wisdom still you hate,
And leave learn'd fools these to debate;
Like rocks in seas ye're easy.
Were I, &c.

"May all you do successful prove;
And may you never fall in love
With what's not firm for your behoof,
Or may make you uneasy.
Were I, &c.

"I love ye well—O! let me be
One of your blyth society;
And, like yourselves, I'll strive to be
Ay humorous and easy.
Were I, &c."

While he was yet unknown to fame, and unpractised in the art of book-making, our poet-laureat made use of the Easy club as a convenient place of publication. In this familiar society, he produced his satirical 'Elegy on Maggy Johnston;' which, with similar poems, he soon after revised and published. In the club too he read an elegy on the death of the celebrated Dr. Pitcairn, who died in 1713; which, though printed by the club, was rejected by the author, when he republished his poems, because it was at once political and personal; and he perhaps regarded it merely as—

——"the moanings of an infant muse,
Who wants its nurse; he's gone who did infuse
In us the principles of wit and sense."

From the year 1715, our poet seems to have paid less attention to his amusement, and more regard to his interest. He wrote many petty poems, which from time to time he published at a proportionate price. In this form, his poetry was at that time attractive; and the women of Edinburgh were wont to send out their children, with a penny, to buy "Ramsay's last piece." After a while, he attracted, by his facility and naturalness, the notice of persons of higher rank and better taste. He was, indeed, diligent to gain friends by panegyrics, and attentive to lose none by his satire; as his satiric muse properly confined her reprehensions to crimes and not to persons.

On those principles he published, about the year 1716, the 'Christ's Kirk on the Green,' a ludicrous poem of James I. of Scotland; "from an old manuscript collection of Scots poems, wrote an hundred and fifty years ago." This allusion is obviously to the well-known collection of Scottish poetry by Bannatyne. Ramsay had confidence enough in his own powers to add a second canto; and "this second part having stood its ground, he was induced to keep a little more company with those comical characters," by adding a third canto. The three cantos were by Ramsay published together in 1718. Such was their popular reception, that the fifth edition of them was published in 1722. Whether Ramsay critically understood the poetical language of the royal poet, I know not; but he certainly published, without a commentary, what has puzzled all the commentators; though King James's ludicrous language may have been understood by the vulgar, who did not fetch their knowledge from so distant a source.(1)

(1) Ramsay prefixed, as a motto, a couplet from "the maist reverend Virgil" of Gawin Douglas:

On the same principles, Ramsay entered with several persons into a poetical intercourse of letters, which will be seen under the head of his Epistolary poems. He found in William Hamilton of Gilbertfield a genius analogous to his own, who having congenial propensities, readily entered into a reciprocation of metrical epistles. This gentleman, who was a son of Hamilton of Ladylands, went early into the army, and became distinguished, during his latter days, by the title of "the lieutenant." He was one of the chief contributors to Watson's 'Choice Collection.' After amusing himself with Ramsay, he produced, in 1722, a new edition of 'The Life of Wallace,' wherein the old words were modernized, and the original narrative was paraphrased. By this performance, which was published by subscription, he lost much of his character with persons of taste; he vitiated the facts by his paraphrase, and perverted the language of Blind Harry by his alterations. From Gilbertfield, whence he sent out this injudicious work, he removed to Letterick in Lanarkshire, where he died in August 1751, at a very advanced age. This person must be distinguished from Hamilton of Bangour, a contemporary poet of a higher quality, who was also connected by his good offices with Ramsay.

Meantime, our poet busied himself in collecting into one volume his various poems, which he published, in the dignified form of a quarto, during the year 1721, when the poet was thirty-five. This volume began with 'The

"Consider it werly, rede ofter than anys;
Weil at anc blenk sle poetry not tane is."

As if this language were not sufficiently obscure, our editor wittily caused this couplet to be printed in Greek types, with blundering inaccuracy. From that time to the present the blunders have been continued, as the meaning was misunderstood. See p. 304, *post*.—The truth is, that the powers of the Greek letters are inadequate to convey the sound and sense of Gawin Douglas's Scottish.

Morning Interview;' and ended with 'The Conclusion,' after the manner of Horace 'Ad Librum suum:'

> ———"Gae spread my fame!
> Away, and fix me an immortal name!
> Ages to come shall thee revive,
> And gar thee wi' new honours live."

His popularity at this epoch may be inferred from the numerous list of subscribers, which consisted of all who were either eminent or fair in Scotland. It is supposed that by this volume, which Ruddiman printed, the poet acquired four hundred guineas. Several copies of recommendatory verses which were prefixed, necessarily tended to promote his profit and to spread his praise. Among those panegyrists, the most prominent was Josiah Burchet, who died in October 1746, after he had sat in six parliaments, and been secretary of the Admiralty for almost half-a-century.(1) By Sir William Scot of Thirlstane, Baronet, who was a contemporary Latin poet of no inconsiderable powers, Ramsay was placed in the temple of Apollo.(2)

Buoyed up by such flattery from friends, our poet seems to have disregarded his enemies as unworthy of his notice: "I have been honoured with three or four satires; but they are such that several of my friends

(1) Gent. Mag. 558.—Burchet left behind him a 'History of the Navy,' which is now nearly forgotten. This gentleman seems to have been greatly captivated by Ramsay's muse:

> "Go on, famed bard, the wonder of our days,
> And crown thy head with never-fading bays;
> While grateful Britons do thy lines revere,
> And value as they ought, their Virgil here."

(2) See the '*Selecta Poemata*' of Dr. Pitcairn, Sir William Scot, and Thomas Kincaid, which were published by Freebairn in 1727, and republished by Millar in 1729, p. 127. "*Effigies Allani Ramsæi, poetæ Scoti, inter cæteras poetarum imagines in templo Apollinis suspensa.*" The learned and elegant Sir William Scot of Thirlestane died at Edinburgh on the 8th of October 1725.

allege I wrote them myself, to make the world believe I have no foes but fools." (1)

To this volume was prefixed a print of Ramsay, by Smibert, who drew his first breath in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh, the son of a dyer, and was bred a coach-painter; but travelling into Italy for instruction, he painted portraits on his return at London, till he was induced by the fascination of Bishop Berkeley, to emigrate with him to Bermudas, and thence to New England. Smibert was born in 1684, and died at Boston in 1751.

The success of Ramsay, we may easily suppose, did not lessen his desire of profit, nor diminish his emulation of fame. He produced his 'Fables and Tales' in 1722; his 'Tale of Three Bonnets' in 1722; and his 'Fair Assembly' in 1723; his poem on 'Health' in 1724, while he still lived at the sign of the Mercury, in the great street of Edinburgh, opposite to the Cross-well. He, in the meantime, projected a publication which promoted his interest and spread his celebrity. Having already published 'Scots Songs,' which were so well received as to pass through a second edition, in 1719; in January 1724, he published the first volume of 'The Tea-Table Miscellany, a collection of Songs, Scottish and English.' This little miscellany was dedicated—

"To ilka lovely British lass,—
Frae lady Charlotte, Anne, and Jean,—
Down to ilk bonny singing Bess,
Wha dances barefoot on the green."

This volume was soon followed by a second. "Being assured," says the collector, "how acceptable new words to known good tunes would prove, I engaged to make

(1) The preface to the 4to of 1721.

verses for above sixty of them, in these two volumes. About thirty were done by some ingenious young gentlemen, who were so well pleased with my undertaking that they generously lent me their assistance." The third volume of 'Celebrated Songs' appeared in 1727, when the collector of them had commenced a bookseller by trade. Several years afterwards, a fourth volume was added to 'The Tea-Table Miscellany,' though I know not if it were also collected by Ramsay. He complained indeed that Thomson, the publisher of the 'Orpheus Caledoneus,' made use of his songs, without asking his consent or acknowledging his obligations. 'The Tea-Table Miscellany' ran through twelve editions, in a few years, owing to the great demand from general approbation.

Ramsay had now felt the facility and found the benefit of compilation; and he took advantage of an opinion, which in those days prevailed in both the ends of our island, that none but poets could be the editors of poets. Rowe published an edition of Shakspeare in 1709; and not long afterwards Pope undertook, with more confidence than judgment, to give an edition of the same immortal dramatist. Thus incited and encouraged, Ramsay published, in October 1724,(1) 'The Evergreen, being a collection of Scots poems, wrote by the ingenious before 1600.' It seems to be universally agreed that Ramsay failed in this difficult undertaking, as Pope also failed in a still more difficult work. "In making his compilation from the Bannatyne MS.," says the late Lord Hailes, "Ramsay has omitted some stanzas, and added others; has modernized the versification, and varied the ancient manner of spelling." Neither Watson the printer, who published, in 1706, 'A Choice Collection of Scots Po-

(1) [* In two small 12mo volumes.]

ems;'[1] nor Hamilton of Gilbertfield, when he republished 'Blind Harry's Wallace;' nor Ramsay, when he published his 'Evergreen,' sufficiently adverted, that if they changed the orthography and modernized the verse, the state of the language, and the nature of the poetry, during former times, could no longer be discovered. It may I think be allowed, that Ramsay was not skilled in the ancient Scottish dialect, as Lord Hailes has suggested; he did not, indeed, understand the language of his country as an antiquary; yet, as a poet, he acquired, by the performance of his task, a knowledge of ancient versification,—he learned old words,—and he habituated himself to peculiarities of phrase. From another imputation of Lord Hailes, that Ramsay, in compiling his glossary, "does not seem to have consulted Ruddiman's glossary to Douglas's Virgil," I think our editor may be defended, by showing that his lordship spoke without authority,—without comparing the glossaries of Ramsay with the glossary of Ruddiman.

It is a remarkable coincidence, that the first poem in Watson's 'Choice Collection' was 'Christ's Kirk on the Green,' which he attributed to King James V.; and the first in 'The Evergreen' of Ramsay was 'Christ's Kirk on the Grene,' which he attributed to King James I. The second in Ramsay's 'Evergreen' is 'The Thistle and the Rose of Dumbar;' the first in Lord Hailes's collection is 'The Thistle and the Rose,' which was written in 1503.

If we compare the two versions, we shall be able to judge how far Ramsay departed from his duty as an editor to maintain his character as a poet.

(1) [* Watson's compilation appeared in three successive parts. The title of the first in the series was 'A Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems. Both Ancient and Modern. By several Hands. Part I.' The second part appeared in 1709, and the third in 1710.]

RAMSAY.

"Quhen Merch with variand winds was overpast,
And sweet Apryle had with his silver showers
Tane leif of Nature with an orient blast,
And lusty May, that mudder is of flowrs,
Had maid the birds begin the tymous hours,
Amang the tendir odours reid and quhyt,
Quhois harmony to heir was grit delyt."

LORD HAILES.

"Quhen Merche wes with variand windis past,
And Appryll had with hir silver shouris
Tane leif at Nature with ane orient blast,
And lusty May, that muddir is of flouris,
Had maid the birdis to begyn thair houris
Amang the tendir odouris reid and quhyt,
Quhois harmony to heir it wes delyt."

Such are the variations of Ramsay from the standard of the original manuscript. He not only varied, but he also added. To 'Dumbar's Lament for the Deth of the Makkaris,' our editor superinduced three stanzas, in the form of a prophecy by the original author, wherein he introduced the editor as "a lad frae Hether-muirs:"

XXV.

"Suthe I forsie, if spaecraft had,
Frae Hether-muirs sall ryse a lad,
Aftir two centries pas, sall he
Revive our fame and memorie:

XXVI.

"Then sall we flourish Evirgrene;
All thanks to careful Bannatyne,
And to the patron (1) kind and fric,
Quha lends the lad baith them and me.

(1) Mr. William Carmichael, brother to the Earl of Hyndeford, who lent "the lad" [Allan Ramsay] that curious collection of MSS. which had

XXVII.

"Far sall we fare baith eist and west,
Owre ilka clime by Scots possest.
Then sen our warks sall never die,
Timor mortis non turbat me."

I strongly suspect that Ramsay wittingly inserted in his 'Evirgrene' several poems which were written by "the Ingenious" subsequent to the year 1600, and even to the year 1700.(1) In the first volume is printed 'The Vision,' which, although it is said to have been "compylit in Latin anno 1300, and translatit in 1524," is obviously modern,—more modern than the Union, and more recent than the accession of George I. The versification, indeed, is ancient, and is written in imitation of what King James calls "the tumbling verse," according to the royal revlis and cavtelis, "to be literal [alliterative] so far as may be."(2) Thus 'The Vision' abounds in alliterations:

"Bedoun the bents of Banquo-brae
Milane I wandert waif and wae,
Musand our main mischance;
How be thae faes we ar undone,
That staw the sacred stane frae Scone,
And leids us sic a daunce.

been formed by Mr. George Bannatyne in 1568, whence those poems were printed.

(1) [* Mr. Chalmers's suspicions were well-founded. "The ballads of the description now wanted printed in 'the Evergreen'" says the enthusiastic Motherwell, "are not numerous."]

(2) It is a curious fact in the history of Scottish poetry, that Scotland enjoyed the benefit of an 'Art of Poesie' before England possessed a similar advantage, with all the efforts of Elizabeth's reign. Webb published his work in 1586, and Puttenham his Art of Poetry in 1589: but King James, who was born in 1566, published in 1585, when he was only nineteen, his 'Schort Treatise, containing some revlis and cavtelis to be observit and escheivit in Scottis Poesie.' The same writer, who treats "maist reverend Virgil of Latine poetis prince," as a blunderbuss, speaks of King James's 'Schort Treatise,' as at once curious though stupid. *Ancient Scottish Poems*, 1786, p. 119.

Quhile Ingland's Edert taks our tours,
And Scotland ferst obeys,
Rude ruffians ransakk ryal bours,
And Baliol homage pays:
Throch feidom our freedom
Is blotted with this skore,
What Romans' or no man's
Pith culd eir do befoir.

Yet the sentiments and the style are modern, and even the orthography is recent, although it is affectedly old. Nor did 'The Vision' appear in any publication or manuscript, before it came forth in 'The Evergreen,' with appropriate signatures,—Ar. Scot, but not A. Scot, as it is printed in the 'Ancient Scots Poets.' Neither was there any poet in Scotland of the name of Ar. Scot, nor Archibald Scot; though there had been indeed an Alexander Scott during the reign of Mary Queen of Scots.(1) From the epoch of the publication of 'The Vision,' Ramsay has been in possession of what the tradition of his family has always said was originally his own. 'The Vision' is declared to be "a capital poem," by the same editor who treats Ramsay as a writer "showing no spark of genius."(2)

(1) See his poetry in the 'Ancient Scots Poems,' 1768, p. 191, 211.

(2) 'Ancient Scottish Poems,' 1786. p. 127, 132.—From the revival, in the present reign, of our taste for the publication and the study of our national poetry during other times, ingenious men cast their eyes upon 'The Vision,' as an object of inquiry, both as to its merit and antiquity. The late Lord Hailes, and the present Dr. Beattie, conjectured that it was modern, or was produced perhaps as late as the year 1715, as an incitement to the Jacobitical spirit which then flamed out into action. Their conjectures are so far true, that 'The Vision' was undoubtedly written "sen this disgraceful paction,"—since the Union; and subsequent to the epoch, "when some fule Scotis lykd to drudge to princes no their awin." It was Jacobitish in its tendency in that age. 'The Vision' has never been discovered, by diligent research, in any ancient collection, either in print or MS. It ought to be admitted as a principle, in literary questions, that he who first publishes any productions must be deemed the writer of them, if he do not show clearly who did write them. And it was certainly first published by Ramsay in 1724, under the disguise of

In 'The Evergreen' was also first printed 'The Eagle and Robin Redbreist,' with the same signature of Ar. Scot; and it was republished in 'The Union,' as the production of Archibald Scott, and among the 'Ancient Scottish Poems,' 1786, as "an elegant fable" by Sir John Bruce. Yet this is merely one of Ramsay's usual fables,

age, and under a signature which referred to a poet of a prior epoch, and yet contained his own initials, in this form, Ar. Scot. Ramsay was in the habit of publishing such poems under similar disguises, for the similar purpose of concealing his principles and his practices. The 'Tale of Three Bonnets' was thus published, without the name of the printer or bookseller; but was advertised to be sold at Ramsay's shop, "among his other pieces." No one ever doubted whether this tale were of Ramsay's composition. Neither did the familiars and the family of our poet ever doubt whether 'The Vision' and 'The Eagle and Robin Redbreist,' were as certainly of his writing. Janet, the poet's daughter, told the late William Tytler, "that her father was the author of both. 'The Roman letters,' said she, 'plainly point out the name and sirname of the author with the addition of his country, which he was always proud to acknowledge.'" *'Trans. of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland,'* vol. i. p. 397.—The same lady repeated the same information to Alexander Fraser Tytler, advocate, and professor of history in Edinburgh, more recently: "that she knew they were her father's composition; that he always acknowledged them to his intimate friends; but did not chuse to avow them, for prudential reasons." *Mr. Tytler's Letter to me, dated the 21st of March,* 1794.—As to the internal evidence; the whole strain of 'The Vision' is that of Ramsay. The fiction is old, but the sentiments are new; it has all the inequalities and unprecision and politics of Ramsay, with his mythological personages, Boreas and Somnus, and Mars and Bacchus. The author, indeed, has many flights of true poetry; but the strength of his pinion does not long sustain him on the wing. He soon descends from his elevation to the level of colloquial vulgarisms:—"and leads us sic a dance;"—"round like a wedder-cock;"—"about poor lickmadowps." It has been suggested to me by an ingenious friend, that explaining in his glossary the word *feidom* to mean 'fatality,' he does not seem to understand the phraseology of his own poem. It is however a fact, that in Scotland, even to this day, *feidom* does signify 'fatality,' as Ramsay has explained it; and is, even now, in daily use. It is derived, and logically, from *fey*, 'fatal,' 'unhappy,' 'unfortunate,' *Rud. Gloss. G. Dougl. Virgil in vo.;* as from *wise* we form *wisdom*, and from *king*, *kingdom*. It is apparent, then, that Ramsay understood perfectly the common word *feidom*, as he properly applied it in the first stanza of 'The Vision.' Upon the whole, it seems to me, that the evidence for the affirmative proposition that our poet did write 'The Vision,' and the 'Eagle and Robin Redbreist,' is decisive; and that the objections in support of the negative proposition are founded in mere suspicion and surmise. Such are the reasons which are submitted for inserting both these poems in this edition of Ramsay's poetry, as being at once the products of his genius and specimens of his performances.

in which he introduced himself as a poet discountenanced by royal neglect, under the fiction of the Robin, who—

> "Resolvit again nae mair to sing,
> Quhair princelie bountie is suppresst,
> By sic with quhome they ar oppresst." (1)

In 'The Evergreen,' was published, in the last place, 'Hardyknute, a fragment.' The inquiry and the acuteness of recent times have discovered this fragment to be also a modern composition. It was first printed at Edinburgh, in 1719, in a separate folio; it was adopted into 'The Evergreen,' in 1724; and it was republished by Dodsley, in 1740.(2) But the author of this imposing imitation of ancient poetry has not hitherto been distinctly ascertained. A writer of discernment and elegance has justly remarked, "that some of the finest lyric compositions of Scotland have been produced by the fair sex." (3) It is to a lady that the world is indebted for 'Hardyknute;' although it was not to Mrs. Halkyt, nor to Mrs. Wardlaw; but it was to a lady of a knightly family,—as Wood or Hearne would have written. The accomplished authoress of 'Hardyknute' was Lady Ward-

(1) In the 'Life of Johnson,' vol. i. p. 93. Boswell says—what surely must have arisen from some mistake—that Guthrie informed him he was the author of "the beautiful little piece, 'The Eagle and Robin Redbreist,' in the collection of poems entitled 'The Union.'" Neither Boswell nor Guthrie seem to have adverted that this "beautiful poem" was first published in 'The Evergreen,' by the original author of it, when Guthrie must have been a very young man; for he died on the 9th of March, 1770. *Gent. Mag.* 143.

(2) Hardyknute was then republished in 4to. with an appropriate preface and notes. Upon inquiring of Mr. Dodsley, about the editor of the edition, 1740, he answered, with his usual liberality, "that we received the poem of 'Hardyknute' from a Scots gentleman of the name of Moncrief, but can give no further account of him, except that about that time he was tutor to some nobleman's son at Eton." Thus far Mr. Dodsley. John Moncrief, a Scotsman, tutor to a young gentleman at Eton, died about 1767, having produced a tragedy, entitled, 'Appius,' 8vo. 1755. *Biog. Dram.* 323.

(3) Scottish Songs, 1794, p. 77.

law of Pitrevie in Fife, who was born in 1677; was married to Sir Henry Wardlaw in 1696; and died in 1726 or 1727; and was buried in the family-vault within the church of Dunfermline. The minute inquiries which I have made, on this curious subject, have perfectly satisfied me that Lady Elizabeth Wardlaw was the authoress of 'Hardyknute.' (1)

(1) Sir Charles Hacket, Bart. of Pitferran, by Janet, the daughter of Sir Patrick Murray, Bart. of Dreddon, had one son, who died unmarried in 1705, and seven daughters. Elizabeth, their second daughter, was baptized on the 15th of April 1677; was married on the 13th of June 1696, to Sir Henry Wardlaw, Bart. This is the authoress of Hardyknute. Sir Charles Hacket's sixth daughter, Charlotte, married Sir John Hope Bruce of Kinross. *Dougl. Bar.* p. 283—286. Sir John Bruce, of consequence, married the sister of Lady Elizabeth Wardlaw. This observation shows the connexion between Sir John and Lady Wardlaw. Sir John, when applied to by Lord Binning with regard to Hardyknute, sent him a copy of that which he had found in a vault at Dunfermline, in "performance of his promise." From these dark expressions, it is inferred that Sir John was the author rather than the finder of it. *Anc. Scot. Poems*, 1786, p. 127. *Percy's Ancient Poems*, vol. iii. p. 3.—There is not the least evidence that Sir John Bruce ever wrote any poetry. It is apparent, that though Sir John may have told the truth, that he did not tell the whole truth; that he knew, but did not choose to tell who was the author; that having given a promise he thought himself obliged to say something; but he in the meantime consulted his wife's sister, who was the authoress, and who yet did not think fit to allow him to speak out. On the other hand, "the late Mr. Hepburn of Keith often declared he was in the house with Lady Wardlaw when she wrote Hardyknute." *Sir Charles Hacket's letter dated 2d November, 1794, to Dr. Stenhouse of Dunfermline.*—Miss Elizabeth Menzies, the daughter of James Menzies, Esq. of Woodend in Perthshire, by Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir Henry Wardlaw, wrote to Sir Charles Hacket, that her mother, who was sister-in-law to Lady Wardlaw, told her that Lady Wardlaw was the real authoress of Hardyknute; that Mary, the wife of Charles Wedderburn, Esq. of Gosford, told Miss Menzies that her mother, Lady Wardlaw, wrote Hardyknute. Both Sir Charles Hacket and Miss Elizabeth Menzies concur in saying that Lady Wardlaw was a woman of elegant accomplishments, who wrote other poems, and practised drawing and cutting paper with her scissors; and who had much wit and humour, with great sweetness of temper. *Sir Charles Hacket's MS. Account of the Wardlaw family.*—The second Edition of Percy's 'Reliques,' 1767, vol. ii. p. 94, speaks of the virtual acknowledgment of the authoress, by the name of Mrs. Wardlaw; yet, in the same book, ed. 1794, vol. iii. p. 3, the editor relinquished his before-mentioned approximation to the truth, by adopting, from the said 'Ancient Scots Poems,' the story of Sir John Bruce, which contains at least a false conclusion from dubious premises. [* "Sir John Bruce," says Sir Walter Scott in his 'Remarks on Popular Poetry,' "was a brave, blunt soldier, who made no pretence whatever to literature; though his

It was intended by Ramsay, if his knowledge had been equal to his inclination, to give an account of the authors who wrote the poems which were published in 'The Evergreen;' but he delayed his laudable design till the publication of the third or fourth volume, which, however, was never given, though such a purpose was thus announced. Considering into whose hands such undertakings were to fall, it is not much to be regretted that Ramsay never executed what he was unfit to perform. There seems never to have been but a second edition of 'The Evergreen,' which was printed, at Edinburgh, for Alexander Donaldson, in 1761, without any amendment or addition.

Ramsay undertook, in the meantime, a task which was more congenial to his talents. Our poet had plainly a strong propensity to pastoral poetry. He wrote a pastoral, entitled 'Richy and Sandy,' on the death of Addison; he wrote a pastoral on the death of Prior; he wrote a pastoral ode on the marriage of the Earl of Wemyss; he wrote a pastoral masque on the nuptials of the Duke of Hamilton, in 1723. And he published, in his 4to of 1721, 'Patie and Roger,' a pastoral, inscribed to Josiah Burchet, one of his first patrons. This was followed, in 1723, by 'Jenny and Meggy,' a pastoral, being "a sequel to Patie and Roger." Nothing now remained for Ramsay but to adopt the intimations which he received from his friends, and to throw his two pastorals into a more dramatical form, with appropriate songs.

This project he happily executed, in 1725, by the publication of his 'Gentle Shepherd,' which is one of the finest pastoral comedies in any language; and which could have been only produced by art co-operating with

daughter, Mrs. Bruce of Arnot, had much talent,—a circumstance which perhaps may have misled the antiquary."]

genius, in a propitious moment for shepherdish poetry. The name, he probably adopted from "the gentle shepheard" in the twelfth ægloge of Spenser. This "pastoral comedy"—as Ramsay called his Doric drama—the poet dedicated, in plain prose, to Susannah, the Countess of Eglinton, in June 1725. There was, at the same time, a poetical dedication of more elaborate praise, by Hamilton of Bangour, an amiable man, and accomplished poet, who finished his short career at Lyons, in 1754, at the age of fifty. This is the same dignified lady, to whom, at the age of 85, Johnson and Boswell offered their homage; whose powers of pleasing continued so resplendent as to charm the fastidious sage into a declaration that, in visiting such a woman, he had spent his day well. This celebrated patroness of poets was the accomplished daughter of the noble house of Kennedy, who having married, in 1708, Alexander the Earl of Eglinton, by whom she had three sons, two of whom succeeded to the earldom, and seven daughters who married into honourable families, died on the 18th of March 1780, at the patriarchal age of ninety-one. (1)

The second edition of this pastoral comedy was printed by Ruddiman, in 1726, for the author, who still resided at his shop, as a bookseller, opposite the Cross at Edinburgh. (2) The tenth edition of it was reprinted by the elegant types of R. and A. Foulis, at Glasgow, in 1750. It has since passed through many editions, some of them with greater, and some with less elegance and accuracy. What has thus pleased many, and pleased long, it would be useless to praise, and idle to censure; yet has hypercriticism, with as much dulness as absurdity, declared

(1) Scots Mag. p. 167.

(2) In the parish-register which records the baptism of his children, Ramsay is called a piriwige-maker in 1713; a weeg-maker in 1714, 1715, and 1716; but on the 10th of August 1725, he is called a bookseller. [* See p. 41, *post.*]

'The Gentle Shepherd' "to be more barbarous and stupid than 'The Beggars' Opera'!"(1) When this captivating drama was first acted, cannot be easily ascertained; but, it certainly was represented after 'The Orphan,' in January 1729, when the author of it contributed an epilogue.

It has been the fate of Ramsay—as it was, indeed, of Terence—to have his fame lessened by detraction, which has attributed to others his dramatic powers. Scipio, and Lælius, are said to have had a great share in the composition of Terence's plays; Sir John Clerk, and Sir William Bennet, are alleged, on less authority, to have assisted Ramsay in his 'Gentle Shepherd.' But it has been well-observed by the late Lord Hailes, "that they who attempt to depreciate his fame, by insinuating that his friends and patrons composed the works which pass under his name, ought first to prove that his friends and patrons were capable of composing 'The Gentle Shepherd.'"(2)

Ramsay showed also his dramatical propensities by writing prologues and epilogues for occasional dramas. He began this congenial practice in 1719, and concluded it in 1729. Some of these may vie with the finest in the English language, for propriety of satire and happiness of point; delicacy of wit and neatness of phrase. This commendation is amply justified by his prologue, which was spoken by one of the gentlemen who acted at Edinburgh 'The Orphan,' and 'The Cheats of Scapin,' for their diversion, on the last night of the year 1719.

The celebrity of Ramsay was attended, however, like the other felicities of life, with circumstances of mortification. He had to struggle with contemporary contenders for poetic fame. There were published about that

(1) Ancient Scottish Poems, 1786, p. 133.
(2) Ancient Scottish Poems, 1768, p. 8.

time some stanzas, entitled 'A Block for Allan Ramsay's Wigs; or, the famous Poet fallen in a trance.' There were also printed some verses, called, 'Allan Ramsay metamorphosed to a Heatherbloter Poet; in a pastoral between Ægon and Melibiæ.' Ramsay was thus induced to give his 'Reasons for not answering the Hackney scribblers:'

> 'These to my blyth indulgent friends:
> Dull foes nought at my hands deserve;
> To pump an answer's a' their ends;
> But, not a line, if they should starve!"

By the attacks of such scribblers Ramsay seems not to have been much moved. He continued to please his numerous readers, by publishing successively popular poems. He printed his 'Fables and Tales,' in 1722; his 'Tale of Three Bonnets,' in the same year; 'The Fair Assembly,' in 1723; his poem on 'Health,' which he addressed to the celebrated Earl of Stair [* in 1724]. And he was thus enabled to publish, in 1728, a second volume of his poems, in quarto, including 'The Gentle Shepherd,' and his 'Masque on the Nuptials of the Duke of Hamilton,' which brings to our recollection the similar madrigals of Ben Jonson. Of this quarto, an octavo edition was published in 1729. Both the volumes were republished, at London, for the booksellers, during the year 1731. The poetry of Ramsay met with a flattering welcome, not only in Scotland and in England, but also in the colonies, and in Ireland; and there was published, at Dublin, an edition of his poems in 1733. Of this universality of reception, our bard delighted to sing in grateful strains, both as a poet and a bookseller.

In 1730, Ramsay published 'A Collection of thirty Fables.' In this species of poetry he appears to have greatly indulged; because what he easily found, he read-

ily delivered. Yet, about this time, he seems to have ceased writing for the public, at the age of forty-five; having diligently tried, during twenty years, to please his countrymen and benefit himself. In his letter to Smibert, he says, in 1736, "these six or seven years past I have not written a line of poetry. I e'en gave over in good time, before the coolness of fancy that attends advanced years should make me risk the reputation I had acquired." (1) Ramsay had now obtained, by his poetry, all the fame which was to be had; and he was incited, by his love of profit, to busy himself, not in writing, but in selling and circulating books. In 1726, he removed from his original dwelling, at the Mercury, opposite the Cross-well, to a house which had been the London coffee-house, in the east end of the Luckenbooths. (2) With this change of situation, he altered his sign; and instead of the original Mercury, he now adopted the heads of two poets,—Drummond of Hawthornden, and Ben Jonson. Here he sold and lent books till a late period of his life; here the wits of Edinburgh used to meet for amusement and for information. From this commodious situation, Gay, a congenial poet, was wont to look out upon the Exchange of Edinburgh, in order to know persons and to ascertain characters. (3)

(1) This curious letter, which is dated the 10th of May 1736, was first published in the Gent. Mag. September, 1784, p. 672; and was thence copied into other miscellanies.

(2) [* Mr. R. Chambers says that the shop to which Ramsay now removed was "one in the second floor of a building also in the High-street, but which stood upon the line of the street alongside of St. Giles's church, where he had some windows which commanded a view of the place around the cross, then the resort of perhaps the most gay and the most dignified part of the population of Scotland."]

(3) The late William Tytler, Esq. recollected Gay, in his shop, desiring Ramsay "to explain to him many of the Scottish expressions of 'The Gentle Shepherd,' which Gay said he would communicate to Pope, who was a great admirer of that pastoral." Gay used to accompany the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry to Scotland. Gay was described by Mr. Tytler, as "a little pleasant-looking man, with a tye-wig."

It was in this society, and in that station, that Ramsay's passion for the drama returned on him. In 1736, at the age of fifty, he undertook to build "a playhouse new, at vast expence:" this house, he built in Carrubber's close. He boasts of having

> "—— kept our troop, by pith of reason,
> Frae bawdy, atheism, and treason."

In vain did Ramsay, and his troop,

> "Only preach, frae moral fable,
> The best instruction they were able."

The act for licensing the stage, which was passed in 1737, crushed the poet's hopes of conveying "the best instruction," and calmed the scrupulosity of those who feared that amusement and religion could not exist together.

At Edinburgh, the magistrate had not yet considered —like the ministers of Elizabeth—that, in well-regulated society, public amusements may produce advantages without any other evils than can be easily corrected. The rulers of Edinburgh, thinking very differently from our dramatist, as to the mode and the matter of the instruction which was thus given to the citizens who were intrusted to their care, shut up his playhouse; leaving the undertaker without relief for what the law considered as a damage without an injury.(1) Our dramatist

(1) There is happily preserved in the Gentlemen's Mag. 1737, p. 507, a poetical address from Ramsay to the Honourable Duncan Forbes, the Lord-president of the Session, and the other judges. This illustrious president was appointed to that high trust, on the 21st of June 1737,—a fact which would ascertain the dates of this whole transaction, if the licensing act (10 Geo. II. ch. 28.) were not mentioned. The address of Ramsay, which is at once a specimen of his poetry, and a history of his playhouse, is subjoined:

> To the Honourable Duncan Forbes of Culloden, Lord-president of the Session, and all our other judges, who are careful of the honour of the government, and the property of the subject:

had on this occasion other mortifications to suffer. There was soon published a poetical pamphlet containing 'The Flight of Religious Piety from Scotland, upon the ac-

THE ADDRESS OF ALLAN RAMSAY

Humbly means and shaws, .

To you, my Lords, whase elevation
Makes you the wardens of the nation,
While you with equal justice stand,
With Lawtie's balance in your hand;—
To you, whase penetrating skill
Can eithly redd the good frae ill,
And ken them well whase fair behaviour
Deserve reward and royal favour,
As like you do, these stonkerd fellows,
Wha merit naithing but the gallows;—
To you, with humble bow, your bard,
Whase greatest brag is your regard,
Begs leave to lay his case before ye,
And for an outgate to implore ye.
Last year, my Lords, nae farrer gane,
A costly wark was undertane
By me, wha had not the least dread
An act wad knock it on the head:
A playhouse new, at vast expence,
To be a large, yet bein defence,
In winter nights, 'gainst wind and weet,
To ward frae cauld the lasses sweet,
While they with bonny smiles attended,
To have their little failures mended;
Where satire, striving still to free them,
Hads out his glass to let them see them,
Here, under rules of right decorum,
By placing consequenee before 'em,
I kept our troop, by pith of reason,
Frae bawdy, atheism, and treason;
And only preach'd, frae moral fable,
The best instruction they were able;
While they by doctrine linsy-woolsy,
Set aff the *utile* with *dulce*.
And shall the man to whom this task falls,
Suffer amang confounded rascals,
That, like vile adders, dart their stings,
And fear nae God, nor honour kings?
Shall I, wha for a tract of years
Have sung to commons and to peers,
And got the general approbation
Of all within the British nation,
At last be tin'd of all my hopes
By them who wont to be my props?

count of Ramsay's lewd books, and the hell-bred play-house comedians, who debauch all the faculties of the soul of our rising generation.'—There also appeared 'A Looking-glass for Allan Ramsay;'—'The dying words of Allan Ramsay.' The lampooners left intimations of what

Be made a loser, and engage
With troubles in declining age;
While wights, to whom my credit stands
For sums, make sour and thrawin demands?
Shall London have its houses twa,
And we be doom'd to 've nane ava?
Is our metrop'lis, anes the place,
Where longsine dwelt the royal race
Of Fergus, this gate dwindled down
T' a level with ilk clachan town,
While thus she suffers the subversion
Of her maist rational diversion?
When ice and snaw o'ercleads the isle,
Wha now will think it worth their while
To leave their gowsty country bowers,
For the anes blythsome Edinburgh's towers,
Where there's no glee to give delight,
And ward frae spleen the langsome night?
For which they'll now have nae relief,
But sonk at hame, and cleck mischief.
Is there ought better than the stage
To mend the follies of the age,
If manag'd as it ought to be,
Frae ilka vice and blaidry free?
Which may be done with perfect ease,
And nought be heard that shall displease,
Or give the least offence or pain,
If we can hae 't restor'd again.
Wherefore, my Lords, I humbly pray
Our lads may be allow'd to play,
At least till new-house debts be paid off,
The cause that I'm the maist afraid of;
Which laide lyes on my single back,
And I man pay it ilka plack.
Now, it 's but just the legislature
Should either say that I 'm a faulter,
Or thole me to employ my bigging,
Or of the burthen ease my rigging,
By ordering, frae the public fund,
A sum to pay for what I 'm bound;
Syne, for amends for what I 've lost,
Edge me into some canny post,
With the good liking of our king,
And your petitioner shall—sing.

A. R.

must have given considerable consolation to our adventurous dramatist; that "he had acquired wealth;" that "he possest a fine house;" that "he had raised his kin to high degree:" all those advantages, we may easily suppose, were merely comparative. This puritanical poet, like other satirists, did not advert that his topics of censure did more honour than hurt to Ramsay, who was only low by accident, and had by fair means raised himself to competence and his family to distinction.

The obscure history of the public amusements of Scotland still requires much illustration. Before the accession of King James—who merits commendation for protecting the drama—histrionic representations stood upon the same principle in Scotland as in England, of allowing the use yet correcting the abuse of such exhibitions. A century of fanaticism ensued, with her agitations and her bloodshed, which obstructed improvement by depressing genius and perverting effort. Merriment began to move on "light fantastic toe," during the reign of Charles II. But the union of the two kingdoms forms the epoch of melioration; though not so much from any positive provision as by consequential results. When fanaticism was repressed, the desire of theatrical amusements began soon to revive. As early as the summer of 1715—an year of agitation—a regular company of comedians acted plays, at the Tennis-court in Holyrood-house. In the subsequent winter, the scene was shifted from the Tennis-court to "the old Magazine-house at the back of the foot of the Canongate." On this occasion, the lovers of the drama were informed, "that several parts would be performed by some new actors just arrived from England."(1) From this epoch, Edinburgh was frequently

(1) All those facts are mentioned on the authority of the Scots Courant of the 5th, 10th, and 15th of August, and of the 16th of December 1715:

exhilarated by scenic representations, which were sometimes diversified "by entertainments of singing and dancing, by gentlemen for their diversion." On the last night of the year 1719, Ramsay supplied a prologue, which is remarkable, at once for elegant raillery and healthful merriment. He again furnished a prologue in 1726, when Anthony Aston entertained the citizens of Edinburgh with theatrical amusements. Ten years afterwards, our dramatist undertook, in an unlucky hour for his own interest, to be the proprietor of a playhouse, which, as we have seen, was shut up by the magistrate. In 1739, the parliament was moved for legal authority to establish a playhouse at Edinburgh, which was refused; because the spirit of certain classes of the people was not yet sufficiently prepared to endure salutary mirth. They were protected in the enjoyment of their gloom by the licensing act, which was erelong circumvented. It was in 1741, that Thomas Este established a theatre in the Taylors' hall, under the pretence of giving a concert of music.(1) The passions of the people, which were sharpened by opposition, supported this evasion of law. In 1746, a theatre was built in the Canongate, where plays were acted, at stated times, under a similar evasion. Thus Ramsay had the satisfaction to see, at the age of sixty, dramatical entertainments enjoyed by the citizens whose theatrical wishes he had rekindled and inflamed.

Our poet, as he had now ceased to write for the public, was only attentive to his shop and his family. He

and those facts disprove what is said by Arnot *Hist. Edin.* p. 366; and by Jackson after him. *Hist. of the Scots Stage*, p. 22.

(1) The Caledonian Mercury of the 12th February 1745, announced the death of Thomas Este, "one of the managers of the concert in the Taylors' hall, who has, for these four years past, most agreeably entertained the town with his excellent performances on the stage." [* The Canongate theatre was built at the head of New-street, by Mr. Lacy Ryan of Covent-Garden, but was not regularly licensed till 1767.]

sent his son to Rome, in 1736, in order to acquire, at that illustrious seat of knowledge, the art of painting, by which he rose to eminence. His wife, who died in 1743, seems to have passed to her grave without an elegy, because the loss was too afflicting for loquacity to deplore.(1) She left him three daughters, who, as they were advanced to womanhood, in some measure supplied her society and superintendence. He spent much of his time, during his latter years, with Sir John Clerk of Pennycuik and Sir Alexander Dick of Prestonfield, who courted his company because they were delighted by his facetiousness. He probably relinquished his shop in 1755. And, for some years, he lived in a fantastical house of an octagon form, which he had built on the north side of the Castle-hill; and which he thought a paragon. This house, he was induced, by his vanity, to show to the late Lord Elibank, who had both acuteness and wit; telling his lordship, at the same time, that the cits say, it resembles a goose-pie; to which my lord readily replied: "Indeed, Allan, now that I see you in it, I think the term is very properly applied."(2)

We may learn some important circumstances with regard to our poet's mature years, and advanced fortune, from an unpublished copy of verses which he wrote to James Clerk, Esq. of Pennycuik, on the 9th of May 1755:

"Born to not e'en ae inch of ground,
I keep my conscience white and sound;

(1) Christian Ross, spouse to Allan Ramsay, merchant, was buried in the cemetery of the Greyfriars, on the 28th of March 1743.—*Rec. of Mortality.*

(2) [* Mr. Chambers says: "The site of this house was selected with the taste of a poet. It commanded a reach of scenery probably not surpassed in Europe, extending from the north of the Forth on the east, to the Grampians on the west, and embracing every variety of beauty and of grandeur."]

And tho' I ne'er was a rich keeper,
To make that up, I live the cheaper;
By that ae knack, I've made a shift
To drive ambitious cares adrift.
And now in years and sense grown auld,
In ease I like my limbs to fauld.
Debts I abhor, and plan to be
Frae shackling trade and danger free;
That I may, loose frae care and strife,
With calmness view the edge of life,
And, when a full ripe age shall crave,
Slide easily into my grave.
Now, seventy years are o'er my head,
And thirty mae may lay me dead."(1)

When Ramsay talked thus familiarly of life and death, he was much afflicted with the scurvy in his gums, which had deprived him not only of his teeth, but even of a part of the jaw-bone. While he jocosely counted upon thirty years to be added to seventy, he much miscalculated the chances of life; for he died at Edinburgh, on the 7th of January, 1758, when he had passed the age of seventy-two, and was buried in the churchyard of the Greyfriars.(2)

(1) MS. copy from Sir James Clerk. These verses disprove an unauthorized story which was first told in Lord Gardenston's 'Miscellanies,'—a disgraceful compilation of no authority. It was compiled by one Callender, who was obliged to flee from the justice of his country. It is therein invidiously said, "that Ramsay died a bankrupt; and that his son paid his debts." We have seen, that the poet, as a discreet man, "abhorred debts." His son may have been his executor, and may have paid such petty debts as the most prudent housekeeper must owe when he pays the debt which all must pay. Some houses in the Luckenbooths are, to this day, possessed by our poet's daughter, from his bequest. He died in easy circumstances, as I have been assured by a very intelligent friend, at Edinburgh, who knew the poet's pecuniary affairs. [* This seems a satisfactory vindication of our poet. Yet Allan Cunningham, in his 'Lives of British Painters,' repeats Callender's statement, asserting that Allan Ramsay, the painter, paid his father debts "when he died in embarrassed circumstances."]

(2) He was buried on the 9th of January, 1758. *Record of Mortality.* —He is therein called "Allan Ramsay, poete, who died of old age. He was well known for his 'Gentle Shepherd,' and many other poetical

Christian Ross, the wife of Allan Ramsay, brought him many children.(1) Two daughters, Christian and Janet, and a son, Allan, survived him. This son, who appears to have received an excellent education, was born with a

pieces in the Scotch dialect, which he wrote and collected." *Scots Mag.* vol. xix. p. 670. — The Gentlemen's Magazine, 1758, p. 46. which also records his death, calls Ramsay, with less fastidiousness, "the celebrated poet." He, who had panegyrized so many poets, now departed with scarcely any poetical notice. Sir John Clerk, one of the Barons of the Exchequer in Scotland, who admired his genius and knew his worth, erected, at his family-seat of Pennycuik, an obelisk to the memory of Ramsay. At Woodhouselee, near the [supposed] scene of 'The Gentle Shepherd,' Alexander F. Tytler, Esq., has dedicated a rustic temple—

"ALLANO RAMSAY ET GENIO LOCI.

"Here midst those scenes that taught thy Doric Muse
Her sweetest song; the hills, the woods, and stream,
Where beauteous Peggy stray'd, list'ning the while
Her Gentle Shepherd's tender tale of love;
Scenes which thy pencil, true to Nature, gave
To live for ever; sacred be this shrine;
And unprofan'd, by ruder hands, the stone
That owes its honours to thy deathless name."

(1) At Edinburgh the sixth day of October 1713.

Registrate to Allan Ramsay, periwige-maker, and Christian Ross, his spouse, New Kirk Parish, a son, Allan. Witnesses, John Symer, William Mitchell, and Robert Mein, merchants, burgesses; and William Baxter.

Registrate to Allan Ramsay, weegmaker, burges, and Christian Ross his spouse, North East (College Kirk) parish, a daughter named Susanna. Witnesses, John Symers, merchant, and John Morrison, merchant. The child was born on the 1st instant. 3d October 1714.

Registrate to Allan Ramsay, weegmaker, and Christian Ross his spouse, North East parish, a son, Niell. Witnesses, Walter Boswell, sadler, and John Symer, merchant. 9th October 1715.

Registrate to Allan Ramsay, weegmaker, and Christian Ross his spouse, North East parish, a son, Robert. Witnesses, John Symers, merchant, and Walter Boswell, sadler. The child was born on the 10th instant. 23d November 1716.

Registrate to Allan Ramsay, bookseller, and Christian Ross his spouse, a daughter, named Agnes. Witnesses, James Norie, painter, and George Young, chyrurgeon. Born the 9th instant. 10th August 1725.

Extracted from the Register of Births and Baptisms for the City of Edinburgh, by John Murdoch, Dep Sess. Clerk.

Christian Ross brought Allan Ramsay three other daughters, who were not recorded in the register. One was born in 1719, one in 1720, and one in 1724, who are mentioned, in his letter to Smibert, as fine girls; "nae wally-dragle among them all." Christian died, lately; Janet is still alive. [* She died in 1804.]

genius both for poetry and painting. He studied the imitative art at London and at Rome, which he practised as a profession; and having risen to distinction as a scholar, and a painter, (1) he died on the 10th of August 1784, at Dover, on his return from France. Allan Ramsay, the painter, was twice married: first, to Miss Bayne, the daughter of Mr. Professor Bayne of Edinburgh, and the sister of the late gallant Captain Bayne of the navy; by whom he had a daughter who died under age. He married, for his second wife, the eldest daughter of Sir Alexander Lindsay of Evelick, Baronet, by Emilia, the daughter of the Viscount of Stormont, and niece to the great Earl of Mansfield; she was also the sister of the late Sir David Lindsay, and Sir John Lindsay. She died in 1782; leaving by Allan Ramsay a daughter who married the late General Sir Archibald Campbell, K. B.; a daughter who married Colonel Malcolm; and a son who is the male representative of our poet, Lieutenant-colonel John Ramsay of the third regiment of foot-guards.

Ramsay, the poet, left behind him so many intimations with regard to his person and his character, that the diligent biographer has more to compile than to conjecture. Of himself, his vanity delighted to speak:

> "Imprimis, then, for tallness, I
> Am five feet and four inches high;
> A black-a-vice dapper fellow,
> Nor lean, nor overlaid with tallow."

As he advanced in years, his appearance no doubt changed. He is described by those who remember him, as a squat man, with a big belly, and a smiling countenance, who wore a fair round wig which was rather

(1) [* He succeeded Shackleton as portrait-painter to George III., and was, Allan Cunningham assures us, "a great favourite at court."]

short. He described himself at a different period; when his vanity was studious to tell,

> "—— I the best and fairest please;
> A little man that lo'es my ease;
> And never thole these passions lang,
> That rudely mint to do me wrang."

With all his socialness(1) and conviviality, he never indulged to excess in the pleasures of the table:

> "I hate a drunkard, or a glutton;
> Yet, I'm nae fae to wine and mutton.
> Then, for the fabrick of my mind,
> 'Tis mair to mirth than grief inclined;
> I rather choose to laugh at folly,
> Than show dislike by melancholy."

As to his religion, he honestly avowed his creed:

> "Neist, Anti-Toland, Blunt, and Whiston,
> Know positively I'm a Christian;
> Believing truths, and thinking free,
> Wishing thrawn parties would agree."

With regard to his politics, he confessed to Arbuckle:

> "Well, then, I'm neither Whig nor Tory;
> Nor credit give to purgatory."

But, there was another party, the Jacobites, for which Ramsay had a predilection, whatever neutrality he might affect. As a poet, he naturally loved freedom and arro-

(2) [* "We have heard," says Mr. Chambers, "the late Mrs. Murray of Henderland, who was sister to the wife of the painter, describe the parties of young people which she used to attend, in the house of the author of 'The Gentle Shepherd,' as among the most pleasant she had ever known. The poet, she said, entered into the amusements of children with the greatest readiness, and made himself an universal favourite amongst them. She was in the habit of attending these parties during the last ten years of Ramsay's life, and the impression she had formed of his whole character was of the most favourable kind."]

gated independence; as all the poets are fond of courting "the mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty." Of the great propensities of his lengthened life, he declares:

> "I never could imagine 't vicious,
> Of a fair fame to be ambitious.
> Proud to be thought a comic poet,
> And let a judge of numbers know it;
> I court occasion thus to show it."

He avowed also, in plain prose, "that I have expressed my thoughts in my native dialect, which was not only inclination, but the desire of my best and wisest friends; and most reasonable; since good imagery, just similes, and all manner of ingenious thoughts, in a well-laid design, is poetry: then, good poetry may be in any language."

About his learning he is equally explicit in making his acknowledgments. He declares, without blushing, that "I understand Horace but faintly in the original; and yet can feast on his beautiful thoughts dressed in British [English]: and perhaps it had been no worse for the great Lyric, if Doctor Bentley had understood the Latin tongue as little as I." He is equally explicit as to his ignorance of the Greek: "The Scotticisms, which perhaps may offend some over-nice ear, give new life and grace to the poetry; and become their places as well as the Doric dialect of Theocritus, which is so much admired by the best judges. When I mention that tongue, I bewail my own little knowledge of it."(1) Yet Ramsay, like other half-learned men, was studious at times to show his erudition. He cultivated the acquaintance of Ruddiman, who was always ready to spare to the needy and helpless a part of his own stores of classic lore. From this fountain of learning, Ramsay easily

(1) The Preface to the ed. 1721.

drew the Latin and Greek mottos which he frequently prefixed to his separate pamphlets; and which, as unsuitable to such poems, by such a bard, have been excluded from these volumes. Scholars did not want such mottos; and the unlearned wish such obstructions out of their way.

Our poet, whatever might be the humility of his pretensions, had his maligners and competitors. I greatly suspect, that Alexander Pennecuik, citizen of Edinburgh, who was called "that famous and learned poet," wrote 'The Flight of Religious Piety from Scotland, upon account of Ramsay's lewd books.' This Alexander Pennecuik must be distinguished from Dr. Alexander Pennecuik, a physician, in Tweedale, who published a topographical description of that pastoral district, in 1715, and who was also ambitious of public fame as a poet and topographer. (1) The rival of Ramsay was a much younger person, who resided in Edinburgh, where he published

(1) The two Pennecuiks were confounded by the editor of the 'Ancient Scottish Poems,' 1786:—"Alexander Pennecuik," says he, "wrote a few Scottish poems of no value, published with his Account of Tweedale. He is said to have given Ramsay the plot of 'The Gentle Shepherd.'" *Pref.* 136.—The said editor seems not to have known "the famous Pennecuik, whose undoubted rivality disproves the unauthorized assertion that he gave Ramsay the plot of 'The Gentle Shepherd.'" Alexander Pennecuik, the rival of Ramsay, was buried in the Greyfriars churchyard, on the 28th of November 1730. *Record of Mortality.* — He is called on the register, "Alexander Pencook, merchant;" as Ramsay was also called by it merchant, because he was a bookseller.

POEMS ON SIMILAR SUBJECTS,

BY RAMSAY.	BY PENNECUIK.
Elegy on John Cupar, Kirk-treasurer's Man. 1714.	Elegy on Robert Forbes, Kirk-treasurer's Man. [*1724.]
The last Speech of a wretched Miser.	The Picture of a Miser; written of George Heriot's Anniversary. 3d June 1728.
On the Royal company of Archers marching, &c. 4th August 1724.	Panegyric on the noble Company of Bowmen, &c. 11th May 1726.

'Streams from Helicon,' and other miscellanies, from time to time, while Ramsay rose into notice notwithstanding his rivalry.

The Nuptials, a Masque, on the Marriage of his Grace James Duke of Hamilton and Brandon, &c.

A Pastoral on the Nuptials of his Grace James Duke of Hamilton, &c., with the Lady Ann Cochran, Daughter of the Right Hon. John Earl of Dundonald; solemnized 14th Feb. 1723.

An Ode sacred to the Memory of Ann Duchess of Hamilton.

The Heavenly Vision; sacred to the Memory of Ann Duchess of Hamilton.

Prologue spoken by Mr. Anthony Aston the first night he acted in Winter 1726.

Prologue to the Beggars' Opera, when first acted in the Tennis-court at Holyrood-house, 1728.

ESSAY ON

THE GENIUS AND WRITINGS OF

ALLAN RAMSAY.

As the writings of Allan Ramsay have now stood the test of the public judgment during more than seventy years; and, in the opinion of the best critics, he seems to bid fair to maintain his station among our poets; it may be no unpleasing nor uninstructive employment to examine the grounds on which that judgment is founded; to ascertain the rank which he holds in the scale of merit; and to state the reasons that may be given for assigning him that distinguished place among the original poets of his country to which I conceive he is entitled.

The genius of Ramsay was original; and the powers of his untutored mind were the gift of nature freely exercising itself within the sphere of its own observation. Born in a wild country, and accustomed to the society of its rustic inhabitants, the poet's talents found their first exercise in observing the varied aspects of the mountains, rivers, and valleys; and the no less varied though simple manners of the rude people with whom he conversed. He viewed the former with the enthusiasm which, in early childhood, is the inseparable attend-

ant of genius; and on the latter he remarked, with that sagacity of discriminating observation which instructed the future moralist, and gave the original intimations to the contemporary satirist. With this predisposition of mind, it is natural to imagine that the education, which he certainly received, opened to him such sources of instruction as English literature could furnish; and his kindred talents directed his reading chiefly to such of the poets as occasion threw in his way.

Inheriting that ardour of feeling which is generally accompanied with strong sentiments of moral excellence, and keenly awake even to those slighter deviations from propriety which constitute the foibles of human conduct, he learned, as it were from intuition, the glowing language which is best fitted for the scourge of vice; as well as the biting ridicule which is the most suitable corrective of gross impropriety without deviating into personal lampoon.

A consciousness of his own talents induced Ramsay to aspire beyond the situation of a mere mechanic; and the early notice which his first poetical productions procured him, was a natural motive for the experiment of a more liberal profession which connected him easily with those men of wit who admired and patronised him. As a bookseller, he had access to a more respectable class in society. We may discern, in the general tenor of his compositions, a respectful demeanor towards the great and the rich, which, though it never descends to adulation or servility, and generally seeks for an apology in some better endowments than mere birth or fortune, is yet a sensible mark that these circumstances had a strong influence on his mind.

As he extended the sphere of his acquaintance, we may presume that his knowledge of men and acquaintance with manners were enlarged; and, in his latter

compositions, we may discern a sufficient intelligence of those general topics which engaged the public attention. The habits of polite life, and the subjects of fashionable conversation, were become familiar at this time to the citizens of Edinburgh, from the periodical papers of Addison and Steele; and the wits of Balfour's Coffee-house, Forrester, Falconer, Bennet, Clerk, Hamilton of Bangour, Preston, and Crawfurd,(1) were a miniature of the society which was to be met with at Will's and Button's.

The political principles of Ramsay were those of an old Scotsman, proud of his country, delighted to call to mind its ancient honours while it held the rank of a distinct kingdom, and attached to the succession of its ancient princes. Of similar sentiments, at that time, were many of the Scottish gentry. The chief friends of the poet were probably men whose sentiments on those subjects agreed with his own; and the Easy club—of which he was an original member—consisted of youths who were Anti-unionists. Yet, among the patrons of Ramsay, were some men of rank, who were actuated by very different principles, and whose official situation would have made it improper for them openly to countenance a poet whose opinions were obnoxious to the rulers of his country. Of this he was aware; and putting a just value on the friendship of those distinguished persons, he learnt to be cautious in the expression of any opinions which might risk the forfeiture of their esteem. Hence he is known to have suppressed some of his earlier productions which had appeared only in manuscript; and others, which prudence forbade him to publish, were ushered into the world without his name, and even with false signatures. Among the former was a poem to the

(1) To the three last of these we owe the words of some of the best of the Scottish songs which are to be found in the collection published by Ramsay, called 'The Tea-Table Miscellany.'

memory of the justly celebrated Dr. Pitcairn, which was printed by the Easy club, but never published; and among the latter is 'The Vision,' which he printed in 'The Evergreen,' with the signature of Ar. Scot.(1)

In Ramsay's 'Vision,' the author, in order to aid the deception, has made use of a more antiquated phraseology than that which we find in his other Scottish poems; but it evidently appears from this attempt, and from the two cantos which he added to King James the First's ludicrous satire of 'Christ's Kirk on the Green,' that Ramsay was not much skilled in the ancient Scottish dialect. Indeed the glossary which he annexed to the two quarto volumes of his poems, wherein are many erroneous interpretations, is of itself sufficient proof of this assertion. In compiling the glossary to his 'Evergreen,' Lord Hailes has remarked that he does not seem ever to have consulted the glossary to Douglas's Virgil; "and yet they who have not consulted it, cannot acquire a competent knowledge of the ancient Scottish dialect, unless by infinite and ungrateful labour."(2) A part of this labour undoubtedly may be ascribed to Ramsay, when he selected and transcribed, from the Bannatyne manuscript, those ancient poems which chiefly compose

(1) See 'Observations on The Vision,' by William Tytler, Esq. of Woodhouselee, in the first volume of the Transactions of Scottish Antiquaries; where that poem, and 'The Eagle and Robin Redbreist,' are proved to be both written by Allan Ramsay.

(2) I am convinced, however, from a comparison of many of Ramsay's interpretations, both in the glossary to 'The Evergreen,' printed in 1724, and in that which is subjoined to his Poems, with the interpretations given by Ruddiman in the glossary to G. Douglas's Virgil, that Ramsay had made frequent use of the latter for the explanation of the most antiquated words; though he does not seem to have studied it with that care which his duty as an editor of ancient Scottish poetry certainly required. In proof of this, his obligations to Ruddiman's glossary, the reader has only to compare with the interpretations in that work, the following, given by Ramsay in the glossary to his Poems: *Bodin, Brankan, Camschough, Dern, Douks, Dymles, Elritch, Ettle, Freck, Gousty, Moup, Pawky, Withershins.* And the following in the glossary to 'The Evergreen:' *Crawdon, Galziart, Ithandly, Ourefret, Ruse, Schent,* &c.

the two volumes of his 'Evergreen:' and hence it is probable, he derived the most of what he knew of the older dialect of his country. His own stock was nothing else than the oral language of the farmers of the Lothians, and the common talk of the citizens of Edinburgh, to which his ears were constantly accustomed. A Scotsman, in the age of Ramsay, generally wrote in English; that is, he imitated the style of the English writers; but when he spoke, he used the language of his country. The sole peculiarity of the style of Ramsay is, that he transferred the oral language to his writings. He could write—as some of his compositions evince—in a style which may be properly termed English verse; but he wrote with more ease in the Scottish dialect, and he preferred it, as judging, not unreasonably, that it conferred a kind of Doric simplicity, which, when he wished to paint with fidelity the manners of his countrymen, and the peculiarities of the lower orders, was extremely suitable to such subjects.

From these considerations, one cannot but wonder at the observation which is sometimes made even by Scotsmen of good taste, that the language of 'The Gentle Shepherd' disgusts from its vulgarity. It is true that in the present day the Scottish dialect is heard only in the mouths of the lowest of the populace, in whom it is generally associated with vulgarity of sentiment; but those critics should recollect that it was the language of the Scottish people which was to be imitated, and that too of the people upwards of a century ago, if we carry our mind back to the epoch of the scene.

If Ramsay had made the shepherds of the lowlands of Scotland, in the middle of the seventeenth century, speak correct English, how preposterous would have been such a composition! But, with perfect propriety, he gave them the language which belonged to them;

and if the sentiments of the speakers be not reproachable with unnecessary vulgarity, we cannot with justice associate vulgarism with a dialect which in itself is proper and in its application is characteristic. After all, what is the language of Ramsay, but the common speech of Yorkshire during the last century? (1)

But, as associated ideas arise only where the connection is either in itself necessary, or the relation is so intimate, the two ideas are seldom found disunited; so of late years that disunion has taken place in a twofold manner. For the language, even of the common people of Scotland, is gradually refining and coming nearer to the English standard; and it has fortunately happened that the Scottish dialect has lately been employed in compositions of transcendent merit, which have not only exhibited the finest strokes of the pathetic, but have attained even to a high pitch of the sublime. For the truth of this observation, we may appeal to 'The Cottar's Saturday Night,' and 'The Vision' of Burns. In these, the language, so far from conveying the idea of vulgarity, appears most eminently suited to the sentiment, which seems to derive from its simplicity, additional tenderness and superior elevation. (2)

(1) See 'A Yorkshire Dialogue in its pure natural dialect,' printed at York, 1684.

(2) As the Scottish language has, to an Englishman, the air of an antiquated tongue, it will be relished as such in grave compositions, on the principle assigned by Quintilian: "Propriis verbis dignitatem dat antiquitas; namque et sanctiorem et magis admirabilem reddunt orationem, quibus non quilibet fuerit usurus: eoque ornamento acerrimi judicii Virgilius unicè est usus. *Olli* enim et *quianam*, et *mis* et *pone*, pellucent et aspergunt illum, quæ etiam in picturis est gratissima, vetustatis inimitabilem arti auctoritatem. *Inst. Orat.* lib. vii. c. 3.—That the Scottish language is relished by an English ear on a kindred principle is acknowledged by a very excellent critic: "I suspect," says Mr. Aiken, after bestowing a very just encomium on 'The Gentle Shepherd,' as approaching nearer to nature than any other pastoral, "that Ramsay gains a great advantage among us by writing in the Scotch dialect. This not being familiar to us, and scarcely understood, softens the harsher parts, and

The Scots and the English languages are, indeed, nothing more than different dialects of the same radical tongue, namely, the Anglo-Saxon; and, setting prejudice apart—which every preference, arising from such associations as we have mentioned, must be—it would not perhaps be difficult, on a fair investigation of the actual merits of both the dialects, to assert the superior advantages of the Scottish to the English, for many species of original composition. But a discussion of this kind would lead too far; and it is but incidentally connected with the proper subject of this essay.(1) It is enough

gives a kind of foreign air that eludes the critic's severity." *Essays on Song-writing*, p. 34.

(1) A learned writer has published, in the Transactions of the Society of Scottish Antiquaries, a dissertation on the Scoto-Saxon dialect; of which, as the work is not in every body's hands, the reader may not be displeased with a short account. The author maintains this proposition: that the Scoto-Saxon dialect was, at the time of the union of the two nations, equal in every respect, and in some respects superior, to the Anglo-Saxon dialect. He lays it down as a principle, that three things constitute the perfection or rather the relative superiority of a language,—richness, energy, and harmony. He observes that a language is rich in proportion to the copiousness of its vocabulary, which will principally depend, 1. on the number of its primitive or radical words; 2. on the multiplicity of its derivations and compounds; and 3. on the variety of its inflexions. In all, or almost all of these respects, he shows the superiority of the Scottish dialect of the Saxon to the English. The Scots have all the English primitives, and many hundreds besides. The Scots have derivatives from diminution, which the English entirely want: e. g. *hat, hatty, hattiky; lass, lassie, lassiky.* The degrees of diminution are almost unlimited: *wife, wifie, wifiky, wee wifiky, wee wee wifiky*, &c. Both the English and Scots dialects are poor in the inflexions; but the glossary to Douglas's Virgil will show that the Scottish inflexions are both more various and less anomalous than the English. Energy is the boast both of the English and the Scottish dialects; but, in this author's opinion, the Scottish poetry can furnish some compositions of far superior energy to any cotemporary English production. With respect to harmony, he gives his suffrage likewise in favour of the Scottish dialect. He observes that the *sh* rarely occurs; its place being supplied by the simple *s*, as in *polis, punis, sal*, &c. The *s* itself is often supplied by the liquids *m* or *n*; as in *expreme, depreme; compone, depone.* Harsh combinations of consonants are avoided; as in using *sel, twal, neglek, temp, stown* or *stawn*, for *self, twelve, neglect, tempt, stolen.* Even the vowel-sounds are, in this author's opinion, more harmonious in the Scots than in the English dialect; as the open *a*, and the proper italic sound of *i*. For further elucidation of this curious subject the dissertation itself must be referred to, which will abundantly gratify the critical reader. It is proper here to observe, that the remarks

to say, that the merits of those very compositions, on which we are now to offer some remarks, are of themselves a sufficient demonstration of the powers of that language in which chiefly they are composed, for many if not for all the purposes of poetry.

The earlier of the poems of Ramsay were printed in single sheets of a quarto and octavo form. Of these many copies are yet to be found; but as they are generally without a date, it is not possible to ascertain with certainty the order in which they were composed. It is probable, however, that the arrangement of the first quarto collection of the author's works, printed in 1721, is nearly chronological; as, except a few of the songs, which are thrown together, the poems appear without any connection of subject or style,—alternately serious and burlesque, moral and satirical; and such of them as bear their dates, are in their proper order with respect to each other.

Yet, it is probable, that Ramsay had been pretty much practised in versification before he wrote that piece which stands first in order in the quarto volume, as it displays a facility of numbers, and a command of poetical expression, which are rarely to be seen in first attempts. 'The Morning Interview' is written with ease and sprightliness, on a trifling subject,—a morning-visit of a beau to his mistress. It pleases, as a picture of the beau-monde of Edinburgh, near a century ago, when the celebrated John Law, the future projector of the Mississippi scheme, reigned sovereign of the fashions;(1) and in the early

of this writer are the more worthy of attention that he is himself an excellent Scottish poet, as the compositions subjoined to his dissertation clearly evince.—'*Three Scottish Poems, with a previous Dissertation on the Scoto-Saxon Dialect, by the Rev. Alexander Geddes, LL.D.*' *Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 402.

(1) Law was an egregious fop. He was commonly termed "Jessamy John," from perfuming his shoes with oil of jessamine. Beau Forrester once exhibited himself in a chintz nightgown, and was dressed and pow-

part of that period, when Forrester, known afterwards as "the Polite Philosopher," gave the laws of taste and elegance. The mention of the sylphs in 'The Morning Interview,' shows that it was composed after the publication of the second edition of 'The Rape of the Lock,' in which that happy machinery was first introduced; and consequently assigns it a date subsequent to 1712. We may presume, therefore, that it was a later composition than that which stands next to it in the quarto collection.

The 'Elegy on Maggy Johnston' was, it is probable, among the first compositions which the author allowed to appear in print. It is in that style in which certainly lay his chief talent—ludicrous and natural description of low life. It is written in the character of a good-humoured, joyous toper, lamenting, in burlesque but cordial strains of regret, the privation of an accustomed haunt, where he and his cronies were wont to resort for the purpose of enjoying a country dinner and a social bowl. Maggy Johnston lived at a small hamlet, called Morningside, about a mile to the south-westward of Edinburgh. Of a similar character with this composition is the 'Elegy on Lucky Wood,' who kept an ale-house in the suburbs; and who is celebrated as a rare phenomenon,—an upright and conscientious hostess. Both these poems are characteristic of times and of manners. The concluding stanza of the latter exhibits a stroke of genuine poetry:

"O Lucky Wood! 'tis hard to bear
Thy loss. But oh! we man forbear.
Yet sall thy memory be dear,
While blooms a tree;

dered by his valet de chambre, on an open balcony in the High-street of Edinburgh.

And after-ages' bairns will speer
'Bout thee—and me."

In the same strain of burlesque composition is the 'Elegy on John Cowper, the Kirk-treasurer's man,' which is dated in 1714. The hint of this *jeu d'esprit* was probably taken from Pope's and Swift's account of the death of Partridge the almanack-maker; for John Cowper survived this intimation of his decease, and must have had his ears frequently stunned with this ludicrous encomium on his merits, which was hawked about the streets in a halfpenny sheet. The kirk-treasurer and his man, who were personages of signal importance in those days, when the discipline of the Kirk savoured strongly of puritanism, and the "stool of repentance" was in habitual use, were fair objects of satire to the rakish wits who suffered from the vigilant discharge of their duty. Pennycuik, the younger, a poet of no mean talents, in ludicrous Scottish verse has an elegy, in the same strain, on Robert Forbes, who was probably John Cowper's successor in office. This bard, who was a cotemporary of Ramsay, and who appears frequently to have chosen from emulation to celebrate the same topics of the day, has satirised the Kirk-treasurer, in a composition entitled, 'The Presbyterian Pope,' in strains of great humour and drollery.(1)

'Lucky Spence's Last Advice' is from the same mint with the preceding compositions, and of its most perfect coinage. The subject being the last words of a dying

(1) I have seen a burlesque imitation of Horace's ode 'Integer vitæ,' in English sapphics, by Allan Ramsay the younger, author of some ingenious essays under the title of 'The Investigator,' who inherited a considerable portion of his father's wit, in which the wild beast of the Sabine forest, which frightened the poet while he was singing the charms of his mistress *Lalage*, (*namque me sylva lupus in Sabina,*) is parodied by the sudden appearance of "the Kirk-treasurer's man" to a rake in his nocturnal rambles.

bawd, I grant, is scarcely fit "for modest ear or eye;" but the moral is strongly pointed:

> Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem
> Testa diu————————

"Such in these moments as in all the past."

Even a death-bed to the hardened sinner brings no repentance. The old procuress instructs her pupils, with her latest breath, in the arts of their vocation, and dies with a glass of gin in her hand. So Pope's expiring courtier:

> "The courtier smooth, who forty years had shin'd
> An humble servant to all human kind,
> Just brought out this, when scarce his tongue could stir:
> 'If—where I'm going—I could serve you, Sir.'"

Of a similar character, and of a tendency more strongly moral, is 'The last Speech of a wretched Miser,'—a satire of very high merit, whether we consider the intimate knowledge of human nature which it displays, the force of humorous description, or the salutary lesson which it inculcates. The character of a miser, even from the pencil of a Moliere, is not drawn with greater force of expression or truth of colouring; nor has the power of this most odious vice to extinguish every moral feeling and sentiment of natural affection, ever been set in a stronger light of reprobation:

> "O gear! I held you lang the gither;
> For you I starv'd my guid auld mither,
> And to Virginia sald my brither,
> And crush'd my wife;
> But now I'm gawn I kenna whither,
> To leave my life.
>
> My life! my God! my spirit yearns,
> Not on my kindred, wife, or bairns;

Sic are but very laigh concerns,
Compar'd with thee;
When now this mortal rottle warns
Me, I man die."

It seems to have been a favourite whim of Ramsay's —as it was the practice of the age—to write elegies on the living: a fancy, in which there is fully as much propriety, as in "Familiar Letters from the Dead to the Living." The former is a harmless jest; the latter, however well-intended, an awful and presumptuous fiction. We may freely amuse ourselves with 'The Life and Acts,' or,

"An elegie on Patie Birnie,
The famous fidler of Kinghorn,
Wha gart the lieges laugh and girn ay,
Aft till the cock proclaim'd the morn.'

This catgut-scraper, like the minstrels of old, was a poet as well as a musician; a rogue too "of infinite humour;" in short, completely versant in the arts of his profession. From the mention of this Scotch Crowdero, we are led to remark that the strongest test of the merits of Ramsay, as a characteristic painter of nature, and of his peculiar excellence in humorous description, is the compliment paid him by the inimitable Hogarth, who dedicated his twelve plates of 'Hudibras,' "To Allan Ramsay of Edinburgh, and William Wood of Great Houghton in Northamptonshire."(1)

(1) [* Hogarth's Illustrations of Hudibras appeared in 1726. "The work," says Allan Cunningham, "was published by subscription, and Allan Ramsay the poet,—a man after Hogarth's own heart, and not unlike him in look,—a lover of rough ready wit, broad humour, and social merriment,—subscribed (he was a bookseller as well as a poet) for thirty copies. Twelve of the plates were published separately, and inscribed by the artist to 'William Ward, of Great Houghton, Northamptonshire, and Allan Ramsay of Edinburgh.' A little praise was then valuable; kindness shown to genius at the commencement of its career is seldom forgotten. A friendly intercourse,—of which, however, I can discover no farther

The silken plaid, which at the period of the Union was the universal attire of the Scottish ladies, and which is capable of more graceful variety of adjustment than any other piece of female dress,(1) was beginning to be laid aside by many of the fair sex after the rebellion of 1715, probably from being considered as a mark of a party. Ramsay had no dislike to it on that account, and he admired it as an elegant and decorous piece of dress. He resolved to vindicate its merits, and turn if possible the tide of fashion, which threatened to strip his countrywomen of their appropriate ornament. 'Tartana, or the Plaid,' is written in English verse, and affords of itself sufficient proof, that had its author been a native of the southern part of the island, he would have held no mean rank in the catalogue of English poets. Ramsay would have been a poet in any language, if, as he truly observes, "good imagery, just similes, and all manner of ingenious thoughts, in a well-laid design, disposed into numbers, is poetry."(2) The 'Tartana' accords, in every particular, with this standard. In celebrating the distinguishing dress of the Caledonian nymphs, they themselves are with propriety his muses:

"Ye Caledonian beauties, who have long
Been both the muse and subject of my song,
Assist your bard, who, in harmonious lays,
Designs the glories of your plaid to raise.
How my fond breast with blazing ardour glows,
Whene'er my song on you just praise bestows!
Phœbus, and his imaginary Nine,
With me have lost the title of divine;

traces than some hasty lines by the poet,—seems to have been carried on after this between Ramsay and Hogarth. But the poet's son forgot his father's affection in the feud which arose between the members of the fraternity of painters and Hogarth."]

(1) See the beautiful antique statue of the Vestal, improperly called the Zingara; and the figure of the Bride in the Aldobrandini marriage.

(2) Preface to the 4to.

To no such shadows will I homage pay;
These to my real muses must give way:
My muses, who on smooth meand'ring Tweed,
Stray through the groves, or grace the clover mead;
Or those who bathe themselves where haughty Clyde
Does roaring o'er his lofty cataracts ride;
Or you who on the banks of gentle Tay,
Drain from the flowers the early dews of May:
* * * * *
Inspir'd by you, what poet can desire
To warm his genius at a brighter fire?"

He begins by celebrating the antiquity of this attire:

"The plaid's antiquity comes first in view:
Precedence to antiquity is due:
Antiquity contains a potent spell
To make even things of little worth excel;
To smallest subjects gives a glaring dash,
Protecting high-born idiots from the lash;
Much more 'tis valued when, with merit plac'd,
It graces merit, and by merit 's grac'd."

With what dexterity is the side-stroke of satire here given! It is the favourite weapon of the poet, and he is completely master of its exercise.

He proceeds to contrast the easy elegance of the plaid with the stiff and formal drapery of the French toilette. He notices its additional value as being the labour of the ladies' hands; he reviews the most remarkable of the Scottish beauties who wore this becoming attire; he enumerates its properties as shielding alike from heat, from cold, from rain, from dust; and finally, as improving by half-concealing the female charms. He deduces its origin, in a beautiful fiction, from the Pagan mythology, adding a new amour of Jupiter to the Ovidian catalogue.

In the two supplemental cantos of 'Christ's Kirk on the Green,' the poet appears again in the style, in which

he peculiarly excelled,—humorous description of vulgar life. The first canto is one of the many compositions of that most accomplished prince, James the First of Scotland, of whom says Major, the historian, "Codices plurimi et cantilenæ memoriter adhuc apud Scotos habentur."(1) It describes, with great humour and pleasantry,

(1) The circumstance of James V. inheriting this talent of his ancestor, and having like him composed humorous ballads, particularly the well-known song of 'The Gaberlunzie-man,' describing a frolic of his own in the disguise of a beggar, has given rise to the doubt whether the poem of 'Christ's Kirk' was not likewise the composition of the latter prince. But the controversy is decided by a twofold mode of proof: 1. Intrinsic evidence; and, 2. Positive testimony. The language of the first canto of 'Christ's Kirk' will appear to those who are critically skilled in the Scottish dialect, to be evidently that of a much older period than the language of 'The Gaberlunzie-man,' or the common language of the age of James V. who was born in 1511, and died in 1542. The improvement, or at least the change produced by the lapse of a century, is plainly observable on the slightest comparison of the two. In 'The Gaberlunzie-man,' the language is very little different from that which is spoken at present by the vulgar in Tweeddale, Clydesdale, the Merse, and Lothians,—the Lowlands of Scotland; nor is there a single word or phrase in that song which the common people in those parts of the country at this day do not understand. In the poem of 'Christ's Kirk,' there occur such words and phrases almost in every stanza, *thir lasses licht of laits—gluvis of the raffel richt—shune of the straits—when men them nicht—her rude was reid—scho bad gae chat him—as he could lanss—the kensie cleikit to the cavell—he cheisit a flane—cheir him—chard him—ane hasty hensure callit Hary—the reird raise rudely wi the rapps—he was not yowden*, &c., &c. These are expressions which no Scotchman of the present day can interpret without the help of a glossary, or without etymological conjecture, and study of the context. The vicious taste of alliteration in poetry was prevalent in the age of James I. It was a favourite ornament of his own style; as the ballad of 'Peeblis to the Play, or at Beltayn,' proves; a composition, in every circumstance of subject, style, and manner, so entirely resembling 'Christ's Kirk,' as to leave no doubt that they are the work of the same hand. Alliteration abounds in the first canto of 'Christ's Kirk;' but it was exploded in the time of James V. at least with all men of taste; there is not a trace of it in 'The Gaberlunzie-man.' In short, there is as remarkable a difference betwixt the style of the latter composition and that of the former, (though similarity of subject would naturally have induced similarity of expression,) as there is between the language of Lydgate—I had almost said of Chaucer—and that of Spencer.—But the positive testimony is decisive. Bannatyne was a cotemporary of James V.; he was a curious collector of poetry, and without doubt perfectly well acquainted with all the king's compositions. James V. died in 1542, in the thirty-first year of his age. Bannatyne's collection, the labour of many years, was finished in 1568; and he asserts 'Christ's Kirk' to have been composed by James the First—"Quod King James I." If this be an erroneous assertion, it

a brawl at a country wake or dancing bout, probably on occasion of a wedding. "The king," says Ramsay, "having painted the rustic squabble with an uncommon spirit, ambitious to imitate so great an original, I put a stop to the war, called a congress, and made them sign a peace, that the world might have their picture in the more agreeable hours of drinking, dancing, and singing." This was a bold attempt; but the poet knew his own powers, and has executed his part in a most masterly manner. The quarrel is put an end to, in the first stanza, by the intervention of a tremendous figure, Θεος απο μηχανης. It is not

——— "the blue-eyed maid,
Who to its sheath returns the shining blade;

but a personage equally awful:

"But now the bauld gude wife of Baith,
Arm'd wi' a great kail-gully,
Came belly-flaught, and loot an aith,
She'd gar them a' be hooly
Fou fast that day."

Terrified into good order, after a slight skirmish between a noisy poltroon and a termagant, the parties with one consent shake hands, adjust their dishevelled locks, tye their cravats, and call in the fiddler. A scene ensues of frolic and jollity which furnishes a picture that Hogarth could not have easily improved. The variety of humorous characters, and their several employments in the piece, evince the most thorough acquaintance with rustic life and manners. The bold and sturdy hostess; the braggadocio, who lay quiet while the fray was at its

would be just such a mistake as if Dodsley, in his Collection, had assigned Gray's 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard,' to Abraham Cowley. See various other arguments in 'Poetical Remains of James I.' printed at Edinburgh in 1783.

height, and whose courage rises when the danger is over; the priggish taylor, who affects the airs of a courtly dancer, "Falkland bred;" the little short-legged gentleman, who makes up in pride what he wants in stature, and who damns the fiddle and calls for the pipes; Tam Lutter, who scorns all amusement but the tankard; the self-important parish-clerk,—"the letter-gae of haly rhime," —who sits at the head of the board, and whose opinions it was unlawful to contradict or question;—all are painted with exquisite humour; each with the strongest characters of discrimination, and with the strictest consonance to nature, from which the poet drew.

The two supplemental cantos of 'Christ's Kirk' were written, the one in 1715, and the other in 1718. The latter is of equal merit with the former. It opens with a description of the morning as rising on the jolly villagers, who are unusually drowsy from the last night's debauch. Here let us, by the way, remark the difference between witty and humorous composition. Butler and Ramsay were each possessed of both wit and humour in no ordinary measure; but the former quality predominated with the English bard, the latter with the Scottish. Butler thus describes the morning, ludicrously, but wittily:

> "The sun had long since in the lap
> Of Thetis taken out his nap;
> And, like a lobster boil'd, the morn
> From black to red began to turn."

This pleases as an ingenious piece of wit. The whimsicalness of the comparison makes us smile; but it is no just picture of nature, and therefore it is not humorous. Now, mark the humour with which Ramsay describes the dawn as rising upon his jolly company at the bridal. A little coarseness must be excused; the picture otherwise had not been faithful:

"Now frae th' east nook of Fife, the dawn
Speel'd westlines up the lift;
Carles, wha heard the cock had crawn,
Begoud to rax and rift;
And greedy wives, wi' girning thrawn,
Cry'd, 'Lasses, up to thrift!'
Dogs barked, and the lads frae hand
Bang'd to their breeks like drift,
Be break of day."

Humour must be consonant to nature; it is nature seen in absurd and ludicrous aspects. Wit gives an apparent and fanciful resemblance to nature; but it requires for its very essence a real contrariety. This canto describes the events of the day following the marriage. The friends of the young couple bring each his present of some utensil or piece of furniture, which is laid down on the bed, with a compliment or a banter. The morning is spent in receiving these tokens of kindness, the day in frolic and sports peculiar to the occasion, and it is concluded with a hearty carousal where the main object is to send the new-married man to bed as drunk as possible, that his wife may know at once the best and worst of her bargain.—Such is the plan of Ramsay's 'Christ's Kirk on the Green,' a composition of very high merit, in its own particular style, and which will preserve the memory of customs and manners long after they have ceased to be observed or are known in actual life.

The review of the humorous compositions of Ramsay prompts an observation which naturally rises from the subject: the pleasure derived from ridicule is felt in a much stronger degree by some temperaments than by others. There are even writers of acuteness and discernment who condemn that pleasure as gross or vulgar, and, therefore, as indicating the want of a delicate taste. Lord Chesterfield thought it unworthy of a man of fashion to laugh. The author of 'Elements of Criticism,'—a work

which displays a great knowledge of human nature, but which misleads sometimes from over-refinement,—asserts, that "Ridicule arises chiefly from pride, which is a selfish passion. It is therefore, at best, but a gross pleasure. A people, it is true, must have emerged out of barbarity, before they can have a taste for ridicule; but it is too rough an entertainment for the highly polished and refined. Cicero discerns in Plautus a happy talent for ridicule, and a peculiar delicacy of wit; but Horace, who made a figure in the court of Augustus when taste was considerably purified, declares against the lowness and roughness of that author's raillery. Ridicule," continues the same author, "is banished France, and is losing ground in England."(1) This appears to me to be a strained apology for the want of a natural, most agreeable, and most useful perception; and the whole doctrine here laid down is, as I apprehend, founded in error. Ridicule does not chiefly arise from pride, which is indeed a selfish passion, and could furnish only a very gross pleasure; but it arises from a strong sense of propriety and impropriety, and a nice discernment both of natural and of moral beauty and deformity. The violation of that propriety,—whether by involuntary error, by folly, or absurdity, or even by some slighter vices,—if not in such a degree as to excite an indignant or angry emotion, produces laughter, which carries with it some degree of scorn and contempt, not arising from any proud feeling of excellence in ourselves, but merely from observing the want of it in others. And here we see the moral end of the perception, which, in truth, is to correct and reform. Men, and nations, when they become too refined, lose that nice perception of propriety and impropriety; for the commerce of the world, by presenting habitual vio-

(1) Chapter ii. part 2.

lations of propriety, occasions the breach of it to be regarded with indifference. This is the cause why ridicule is banished France, and why it is perhaps losing ground in England; a truth therefore little to the honour of any nation of which it can be predicted. With respect to the last, however, we would fain hope that the observation is unjust. Lord Chesterfield, by birth an Englishman, was a Frenchman both in manners and in principles. The sentiment of Horace is suitable to a courtier of the reign of Augustus; his morality was that of a corrupted age, and his taste was influenced by that morality. The times of Cicero,—evil as he thought them,—were not so refined; and he was himself a man of rigid virtue. Let us then cherish the sentiment of ridicule, as a proof of uncorrupted manners; and let us value it for its moral usefulness. Woe be to that nation, where it either ceases to be generally felt, or, in the approach of that fatal period, becomes an object of censure to the critic, or of condemnation to the moralist!

'The City of Edinburgh's Address to the Country,' is dated in November 1718. It commences playfully, and in imitation of the epistolary form which is used in public writings that are issued by the sovereign:—

> "From me, Edina, to the brave and fair,
> Health, joy, and love, and banishment of care.
> Forasmuch as bare fields, &c.

The pleasures and comforts of a city-life, in winter, are delineated with great spirit and vivacity; and the colouring is glowing and attractive. The picture has likewise its peculiar merit, from exhibiting the appropriate features of the Scottish capital, with respect to customs and modes of life at the period in which it was drawn. The greater cities, the residences of courts, possess a similarity, or rather uniformity of character, of which the features have

been so frequently drawn that the delineation has lost in a great measure the charm of novelty. Edinburgh, possessing the rank, and in no small degree the splendour of a metropolis, but no longer the residence of a court, promises from that circumstance to exhibit manners of her own: and this in many respects is really the case. Still, however, the general characters are nearly the same, Milton, in the latter part of his 'Allegro,' has given a masterly sketch of them:

> "Towered cities please us then,
> And the busy hum of men," &c.

It is amusing to mark the same, or nearly similar ideas, delineated by two writers of so different a character and genius as Milton and Ramsay; nor is the comparison dishonourable to the former, nor the contrast discreditable to the latter. The muse of Ramsay wears, as usual, her comic sock; while that of Milton, even in a moment of gaiety, preserves her air of majesty, and deigns not to divest herself of the buskin.

The poem of 'Content,' though displaying passages of considerable merit, is languid on the whole, from the trite nature of the subject, the awkward manner in which the piece is conducted, and its inordinate length. Silenus, conjured by the poet to

> "Retail his gather'd knowledge, and disclose
> What state of life enjoys the most repose,"

describes a variety of characters, without order or connection, who, from some prevalent evil passion or vicious conformation of mind, fail to attain that happiness which they pursue and are a prey to discontent. Silenus ends his song, and the poet falls asleep; when Minerva appears to him in a dream, and sets out with him as his

guide "to find the habitation of Content." They travel through camps, crowded cities, warehouses, and fragrant fields; and at length, by means of an old telescope made by Socrates and Epictetus, they discover the object of their search, in a palace on the top of a hill. "Touchstone Disappointment" guards the door, and tries the merits of various travellers, male and female, who seek admission into this residence of bliss. Of these, some of the characters are painted with propriety and skill. The apostrophe to the miser is vigorous, both in the thought and the expression:

> "Poor griping thing! how useless is thy breath!
> While nothing's so much long'd for as thy death.
> How meanly hast thou spent thy lease of years,
> A slave to poverty, to toils and fears!
> And all to vie with some black rugged hill,
> Whose rich contents millions of chests can fill.
> As round the greedy rock clings to the mine,
> And hinders it in open day to shine,
> Till diggers hew it from the spar's embrace,
> Making it circle, stamp'd with Cæsar's face:
> So dost thou hoard, and from thy prince purloin
> His useful image, and thy country's coin;
> Till gaping heirs have freed th' imprison'd slave,
> When, to their comfort, thou hast fill'd a grave."

'Wealth, or the Woody;(1) a Poem on the South Sea:' written June 1720. At a time when this fascinating project was at its height, and the nation seemed intoxicated to the utmost pitch, Ramsay appears to have entertained a just suspicion of the solidity of a scheme, which promised boundless wealth to a people without the smallest exertion of talents or of industry; and this composition is evidently intended to put his credulous countrymen on their guard against a delusion which he

(1) The *woody* is the gallows.

foresaw would entice thousands to their ruin. After a poignant description of the effect produced by a sudden change of prosperous fortune on native meanness of soul; the insolence and pride attending undeserved elevation; and painting, with the pencil of satire, the fastidious airs assumed by those who, a few months before, were the tenants of a garret,

> "And only durst, in twilight or the dark,
> Steal to a common cook's, with half a mark;"

how prophetic is the following anticipation of what a similar term of time might probably produce!

> "This I foresee, and time shall prove I'm right,
> (For he's nae poet wants the second sight,)
> When autumn's stores are ruck'd up in the yard,
> And sleet and snaw dreeps down cauld winter's beard;
> When bleak November's winds make forests bare,
> And with splenetic vapours fill the air;
> Then, then, in gardens, parks, or silent glen,
> When trees bear nothing else, they'll carry—men."

'The Prospect of Plenty' follows. To the chimerical hopes of inexhaustible riches from the project of the South sea, the poet now opposes the certain prospect of national wealth from the prosecution of the fisheries in the North sea; thus judiciously pointing the attention of his countrymen to the solid fruits of patient industry, and contrasting these with the airy projects of idle speculation. Of industry the certain consequence is plenty,—a gradual enlargement of all the comforts of society,—the advancement of the useful and the encouragement of the elegant arts,—the cultivation of talents,—the refinement of manners,—the increase of population:—all that contributes either to national prosperity, or to the rational enjoyments of life. The composition and

structure of this piece are less deserving of encomium than the wisdom of its precepts. An unskilful use is made of the Heathen mythology. Amphitrite claims the song; Nereus rises from his watery bed; and Oceanus with pleasure hears him sing—of herring-busses filling the northern seas—" in order rang'd before the muse's eye." The measure, which is heroic, is at variance with the dialect and phraseology, which are provincial and burlesque.

The elapse of a few months completely justified the poet's foresight, in the preceding composition: and in an Epistle to Lord Ramsay, entitled 'The Rise and Fall of the Stocks,' he relates the origin and progress of the South sea bubble, till its burst into air. This piece is dated the 25th March, 1721. It is a strong and vivid picture, contrasting the tumultuous infatuation that prevailed while the project was at its height, with the deep despondency that attended its dissolution. He cautions his countrymen from giving way to this despondency; he labours to teach them the best improvement of their misfortunes: and presents to their minds the prospect of a bright sunshine which is to break forth after a gloomy morning.

On the same subject, in a happy and frolicksome moment, our poet wrote 'The Satyr's Comic Project for recovering a young bankrupt Stock-jobber.' It is a parody of the well-known ballad of 'Colin's Complaint.'—

> "By the side of a murmuring stream,
> A shepherd forsaken was laid," &c.
>
> "On the shore of a low ebbing sea,
> A sighing young jobber was seen,
> Staring wistfully at an old tree,
> Which grew on the neighbouring green."

The 'Project,' if it want the merit of novelty, has the su-

perior recommendation of constant repetition with complete success. The young stock-jobber, in despair of retrieving his broken fortune, and meditating to purchase a halter, is addressed by a satyr:

"A satyr that wander'd along,
With a laugh to his raving replied;
The savage maliciously sung,
And jok'd, while the stockjobber cried:

'Come, hold up thy head, foolish wight!
I'll teach thee thy loss to retrieve;
Observe me this project aright,
And think not of hanging, but live.

'Hecatissa, conceited and old,
Affects in her airs to seem young;
Her jointure yields plenty of gold,
And plenty of nonsense her tongue.

'Lay siege to her for a short space,
Ne'er mind that she's wrinkled and grey;
Extol her for beauty and grace,
And doubt not of winning the day,'" &c.

There is no ancient poet whose compositions have so frequently been the subject of imitation as Horace. The reasons are: he is a jocose and festive moralist; his philosophy has nothing of the austere, even his satire is tempered with good-humour; and his pieces are short, and within the compass of a moderate exertion of the imitator. But, for these reasons likewise, we have many unskilful attempts; for the happy ease of the composition is judged to be a proof that it may be easily composed. Yet observe what was the opinion of one of the best of the English critics, in reviewing the imitations of Horace by one of the greatest of the English poets: "To fall short of the original cannot be deemed a disgrace to him, (Pope,) or to any other writer, if we consider the ex-

treme difficulty of transfusing into another language the subtle beauties of Horace's dignified familiarity, and the uncommon union of so much facility and force."(1)

The above remark, however, is not strictly applicable to the imitations of Horace by Ramsay, as he had not properly the task of translating from his original. He fairly tells us that his chief acquaintance with Horace was at second-hand, and through the medium of English translations.(2) But this is no diminution of his merits, as we do not find that he has borrowed any thing of the dress or manner in which former translators had clothed the thoughts of the Roman poet. He has clad him according to his own fancy, in the general costume of his native country. Ramsay was himself (if the expression may be allowed) a true Horatian genius. In taste, in passion, and in sentiment, a friend to the innocent, because moderate, gratifications of convivial intercourse; an Epicurean in every thing, but laxity of moral and religious principle.

To William Earl of Dalhousie, the chief of his name and family, the poet addresses, with propriety, his imitation of the first ode of Horace to Mecænas:

Mecœnas atavis edite regibus.

"Dalhousie of an auld descent."

This composition,—which from its fidelity to the thought and happy imitation of the style of the original, might almost fall under the description of a translation,—is distinguished from that species of writing solely by this peculiarity, in which lies the chief merit of the copyist, an exact adaptation of the different characters in the original

(1) Warton's Essay on Pope, vol. ii. p. 338.

(2) "I understand Horace but faintly in the original, and yet can feast on his beautiful thoughts dressed in English." — *Preface to Ramsay's Poems.*

to modern times and to the manners of his own country:

"Some like to study, some to play,
Some on the Links to win the day,
And gar the courser run like wud," &c.

Sunt quos curriculo pulverem Olympicum
Collegisse juvat, &c.

"The Lothian farmer he likes best
To be of gude faugh riggs possest;
And fen upon a frugal stock,
Where his forbears had us'd the yoke."

Illum de proprio condidit horreo,
Quicquid de Libycis versitur areis,
Gaudentem patrios findere sarculo
Agros. ———

In the piece which immediately follows, or Horace's address *Ad navim Virgilium Athenas vehentem*, this peculiarity is wanting. There is no adaptation of the sentiments of the Roman poet to modern times; but instead of it, a burlesque of the original, by substituting in place of its lofty imagery and serious style, a ludicrous caricature of its figures and a vulgar phraseology. The worst is, that this burlesque is not professed; nor is it universal. Grave and judicious moral sentiments are illustrated by ludicrous figures, and debased by vulgar expression. Thus the topic of the origin of evil, which the Roman poet attributes to the crime of Prometheus in stealing fire from heaven, and which he treats in terms of suitable solemnity,—is, after a grave introduction, thrown most unseasonably into ridicule by low and ludicrous phraseology:

"Audacious men at nought will stand,
When vicious passions have command.

Prometheus ventured up, and staw
A lowan coal frae heaven's high ha';
Unsonsy thrift! which fevers brought
In bikes, which fowk like sybows hought.
Then Death, erst slaw, began to ling,
And fast as haps to dart his sting.
Neist, Dædalus must contradict
Nature forsooth, and feathers stick
Upon his back.———

This is injudicious: the subject might admit of a ludicrous parody, but we have here only a burlesque translation, and that but awkwardly performed.

Of a character widely distinct from the preceding, is the imitation of Horace's ode to Sestius, *Solvitur acris hyems*. Here, the native language of the poet has perfect propriety. The imagery of the original is familiar; it is a just picture of nature. The return of spring is described as it is seen, and felt: the renovated beauty of inanimate nature, and the gaiety thence communicated to all animated beings, admirably described in the original, is pictured in the copy with no other change than the adaptation, by the Scottish poet, to the scenery and manners of his own country. Here Ramsay was truly within the sphere of his peculiar talents. In this ode to Sestius, and yet more remarkably in the imitation of *Vides ut alta stet nive candidum, Soracte*, he displays a singular felicity of genius. Of this most beautiful composition I have no scruple to affirm, what I believe will be assented to by all, who are competent to judge of poetry alike in either language, that it surpasses the merit of the original:

"Look up to Pentland's towering taps,
Bury'd beneath great wreaths of snaw."

As the Roman bard throws his eye on the Tuscan Soracte, with what propriety does the Scottish poet, the citizen

of Edinburgh, direct his prospect to the Pentland hills! In the original the description is less particular, and the moral is more sententiously expressed, than in the copy. But this appears to me to constitute an additional merit of the latter. The scenes are not described by their general features; they are pictured to the eye; and the amplitude of easy and jocular expression gives an interest more approaching to the dramatic:

"Driving their baws frae whins or tee,
There's no nae gowfers to be seen;
Nor dousser folk wysing a jee
The byass-bowls on Tamson's green.
Then fling on coals, and ripe the ribs,
And beek the house baith butt and ben;
That mutchkin stowp it hads but dribs,
Then let's get in the tappit-hen.
Good claret best keeps out the cauld,
And drives away the winter soon,
It makes a man baith gash and bauld,
And heaves his saul beyond the moon."

Who but a kindred genius could have thus delightfully paraphrased *Donec virenti canities abest*, &c.

"Be sure ye dinna quit the grip
Of ilka joy when ye are young,
Before auld age your vitals nip,
And lay ye twafald o'er a rung.
Sweet youth's a blyth and heartsome time;
Then, lads and lasses, while 'tis May,
Gae pou the gowan in its prime,
Before it wither and decay;
Watch the saft minutes of delyte,
When Jenny speaks beneath her breath,
And kisses, laying a' the wyte
On you, if she kepp ony skaith.
'Haith ye're ill-bred,' she'll smiling say;
'Ye'll worry me, ye greedy rook!'
Sine frae your arms she'll rin away,
And hide hersell in some dark nook.

Her laugh will lead you to the place
Where lies the happiness you want,
And plainly tell you to your face,
Nineteen nay-says are half a grant."

I am well aware that this is truly φωνάντα συνετοῖσι, and that none but a Scotsman—and he a man of taste and a scholar—can fully appreciate the merit of this imitation, or thoroughly conceive its beauties; but even an Englishman may discern a part of the merits of the original, although this is all that perhaps he can do.

But the talents of Ramsay are not only to be admired in that species of poetry which falls under the description of free translation, or imitation; in original compositions of his own, he has adopted the Horatian manner with singular felicity both of sentiment and expression. Of this an admirable specimen is 'The Epistle to Mr. —— on his Marriage.' It is *multum in parvo*,—a text for many homilies. The wisdom of the poet's counsels will be acknowledged by all who are competent to judge of them; and we relish his precepts the better, that it is the easy friend and not the pedantic moralist who addresses us. In the 'Epistle to Robert Yarde, of Devonshire, Esq.' we discern the moral and philosophic spirit of his Master, the just estimate of human enjoyments, the well-regulated mind, which balances the misfortunes with the pleasures of life, and sagely inculcates the great lesson of contentment with the lot assigned to us. The manner too is easy, familiar, and spirited. The Scottish dialect, in which it is composed, gives additional *naïvetè*, though we regret, in a few expressions, a tincture of vulgarity. In this pleasing composition, which I am inclined to class among the best of our author's lesser pieces, we have an amplified commentary, and beautiful illustration, of the Horatian text—

Auream quisquis mediocritatem
Diligit ————

or, yet more strictly, of the philosophic paradox of Hesiod, Νήπιοι οὐδ' ἴσασιν ὅσῳ πλέον ἥμισυ παντός; which Cowley has so beautifully illustrated in his essay 'Of Agriculture.'

In the 'Address to his Book,' with which he concludes the first volume of his poems, our author has imitated with singular success the manner of the Roman lyric. A moderate portion of vanity is the chartered right of a poet. If he augur not for himself immortality, there is perhaps a fair presumption that he will never attain it. Yet, such is the pride of our nature, and our jealousy of all assuming pretensions, we cannot bear to see this sentiment seriously entertained or too confidently asserted; it will then offend by its arrogance; and its imprudent cherisher will justly share the fate, which Shakspeare announces to that

> "Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself,
> And falls on the other side."

It is a wiser policy to veil it in the garb of jocularity; as if the poet even ridiculed himself for his presumption. Thus Ramsay, after expressing his dread of the worst of all fates—neglect, and oblivion,—addresses, very happily, his "dear venturous book:"

> "Away sic fears! Gae spread my fame,
> And fix me an immortal name;
> Ages to come shall thee revive,
> And gar thee with new honours live;
> The future critics, I foresee,
> Shall have their notes on notes on thee;
> The wits unborn shall beauties find,
> That never entered in my mind."

As the Horatian manner is imitated in the preceding

pieces, and in the excellent address 'To Mr. William Aikman;' the 'Epistle to Mr. Arbuckle' is an imitation, no less successful, of the Hudibrastic. The poet's picture of himself is humorous and spirited; as if drawn by the pencil of Hogarth, we see him reflected from his own mirror. He delineates, with equal spirit, his mental as his corporeal qualities; and assuming nothing that tends to extraordinary exaltation, we are the more apt to give him credit for the fidelity of his draught. Indeed, the character allowed him by the wits and poets who were his contemporaries, is sufficient evidence that an overweening conceit of his own abilities was none of his defects. Pope, Gay, Swift, Arbuthnot, Steele, were all admirers, and patrons of our Scotish bard. Somerville was his correspondent and encomiast. The writer of these pages has it on authority which he cannot question, (a near relation of the celebrated Dr. Arbuthnot,) that Pope was particularly delighted with the 'Gentle Shepherd;' and was wont to make Arbuthnot interpret to him such passages as he could not easily understand. It is, therefore, with justice, that the ingenious Sir William Scott of Thirlestane, who died at Edinburgh on the 8th of October 1725, records, in an inscription which is not unworthy of the pen of a Catullus, the admission of the portrait of Ramsay among those genuine poets, whose images adorned the temple of Apollo;

Effigies Allani Ramsœi, Poëtæ Scoti, inter cæteras Poëtarum Imagines in Templo Apollonis suspensa:

Ductam Parrhasiâ videtis arte
Allani effigiem, favente Phœbo,
Qui Scotis numeros suos, novoque
Priscam restituit vigore linguam.
Hanc Phœbus tabulam, hanc novem sorores
Suspendunt lepidis jocis dicatam:
Gaudete, O Veneres, Cupidinesque,

Omnes illecebræ, facetiæque,
Plausus edite; nunc in æde Phœbi
Splendet conspicuo decore, vestri
Allani referens tabella vultus.(1)

In mentioning the poetical epistles of Ramsay, the facetious correspondence between him and Lieutenant William Hamilton must not be forgotten. This gentleman, who seems to have inherited a talent for easy versification, with a considerable vein for humour, had figured in Scottish verse several years before Ramsay was known as a poet; nor is it improbable that on some of the humorous compositions of the latter our author formed his own manner, in those burlesque pieces, which are in the Scottish dialect, and peculiar measure of six lines; as the 'Elegy on Maggy Johnston,' &c. In Watson's Collection, printed at Edinburgh in 1711, we find Hamilton's 'Elegy on Bonny Heck,' which is alluded to in these familiar Epistles between him and Ramsay, and justly praised. He sustains his part in this correspondence with great spirit, nor is it easy to decide which of the poets has the superiority in the contest.

The 'Fables' of Ramsay are not of uniform merit. In some of his compositions of this kind he has attained to a high pitch of excellence; in others he is beneath mediocrity. If we may judge from the very small number of eminent fabulists, there is no species of composition which is more difficult, than that of a perfect fable. Æsop,—who, if not the inventor, was probably among the earliest of the writers of fable,—seems to have had no other idea in his compositions than to convey some moral truth in a short and apposite allegory. Most of his fables are of a serious nature. Such of them as

(1) 'Poemata D. Gulielmi Scoti de Thirlestane;' printed along with 'Selecta Poemata Archibaldi Pitcarnii,' &c. Edinburgi 1727.

possess any portion of festivity, as the Fox and the Crow with the cheese in its beak, seem to derive it purely from the accidental nature of the story. The later fabulists have annexed other requisites to the composition of a fable which tend to raise it in dignity and usefulness. The fables of Phædrus gave the first example of that ingenuity, or *naïvetê* of expression, and of that slyness of wit,—*vafrities ingenii*,—which have since his time been esteemed the characteristics of this species of writing. In the former of these qualities, Lafontaine, the chief of the modern diciples of Phædrus, is supremely excellent; but with regard to the latter, he errs from an exuberance of wit, which derogates from the superior requisite of simplicity. In reality, the latter character seems now to be fixed as the essential requisite of fable; and where simplicity is preserved in thought and in expression, the poet may indulge his genius even for the highest efforts of his art, the power of descriptive painting, the tender, the pathetic, perhaps even the sublime. In this higher walk of fable, the illustrious Desbillons stands perhaps far removed beyond competition. The fables of Gay have wit and ease and elegance; but they are deficient in simplicity. They fail yet more in dramatic propriety. A good fabulist is he who, like a good dramatist,

Reddere personæ sit convenientia cuique:

There must be a nice adjustment between the real characters and the assumed. Gay's animals sustain the parts of statesmen, philosophers, beaux, and critics: and they act in their fictitious characters with sufficient aptitude and address; but we lose sight entirely of their original nature; we seldom perceive a trace remaining of the fox, the elephant, the monkey, or the mastiff. Any other animals might have been employed to fill

their parts: the apologue, therefore, is deficient in characteristic, or in dramatic propriety.

The best of Ramsay's fables are 'The Ass and the Brock,' 'The Caterpillar and the Ant,' 'The twa Cats and the Cheese.' These, with the utmost propriety of character, have all the *naïveté* of Phædrus and Lafontaine, with the wit and ease of Gay. The rest are entitled to no high commendation.

The comic powers of Ramsay found a much superior field of exercise in his 'Tales;' and of these it is much to be regretted that he has left so few. 'The Monk and the Miller's Wife' would of itself be his passport to immortality as a comic poet. In this capacity, he might enter the lists with Chaucer, and Boccacio, with no great risk of discomfiture. Though far their inferior in acquired address, his native strength was perhaps not widely disproportionate. Of this admirable tale, I conceive he has the merit of the invention; as the story is not to be found in any of the older writers, as Sacchetti, Boccacio, or in the 'Cento Novelle antiche.' In a few circumstances there is indeed a small resemblance to the 73d of the 'Cent nouvelles Nouvelles,' entitled 'l'Oiseau en la Cage,' which barely affords a presumption that Ramsay may have read that story; but in all the material circumstances, his 'Monk and the Miller's Wife' is original. A story of more festive humour could not have been devised. The characters are sustained with consummate propriety; the manners are true to nature; and poetic justice is most strictly observed in the winding up of the piece. We are amused with the ingenuous simplicity and credulity of the honest miller; we are delighted with the malicious roguery of the young student: who amply revenges himself, yet, with infinite good-nature, spares his hostess, and her sanctimonious

gallant, that utter disgrace, which they might have justly expected at his offended hands.

Of the other pieces entitled 'Tales,' 'The Lure' is the best; yet it is more properly a satirical fable or allegory. The narrative and descriptive parts have much merit; but the moral of the fiction scarcely atones for its indelicacy. 'The Tale of Three Bonnets' is rather a dramatic dialogue than a proper tale. It is a severe political satire against his countrymen, for agreeing to the union of the kingdoms. Had our author lived to the present age, he would have confessed the absurdity of his prejudices, and borne testimony to the falsehood of his own predictions. Abstracting from the error of its opinions, we see the genius of the author in the characteristic painting, the knowledge of life and manners, and the keen edge of satire, which are conspicuous in this performance. It was among those compositions which the author,—perhaps grown wiser as a politician,—did not admit into the collection of his works; though it appears in a separate pamphlet, along with the two tales before mentioned, "printed for the author, and sold at his shop, Edinburgh."

On the same or a kindred subject, on which it appears that the mind of our author had taken a keener interest than he dared to avow, is 'The Vision,' printed by him in 'The Evergreen,' with a misleading signature. This fine poem, under the affected disguise of being "Compylit in Latin be a most lernit clerk, in tyme of our hairship and oppression, anno 1300, and translatit in 1524," is ascertained to have been composed by Ramsay, about the period of the rebellion, 1715. During half-a-century, it imposed itself upon the public as an ancient composition. Lord Hailes and Doctor Beattie at length gave a positive opinion that it was not older than that epoch. The arguments brought by the elder Mr. Tyt-

ler,(1) for assigning it to Allan Ramsay, are convincing: —1. It was first published by him, and not found in any older collection than 'The Evergreen.'—2. There were affixed to it, in Roman letters, AR. SCOT; which are indicative of his own name and country.—3. Its political sentiments coincide with his.—4. The introduction of humorous description, which is unsuitable to the general strain of the composition, but consonant to Ramsay's predominant talent.—5. The positive acknowledgment of the daughter of the poet, (a lady of much discernment and probity,) that this poem was of her father's composition. In addition to these reasons, which already go far to decide the question, I shall throw some other arguments into the scale:—1. Ramsay was desirous of making 'The Vision' pass for the composition of Alexander Scot, of whom we find some other poems in 'The Evergreen,' particularly 'A New Year's Gift to Queen Mary,' but he has unluckily been inattentive to chronology. This poem of Scot's is dated 1562, whereas 'The Vision' is pretended to be translated in 1524. Here is an interval of near forty years,—a period to which the poetical life of very few writers has been known to extend, and it is believed of none who have left so few remains.—2. 'The Vision,' though feigned to be composed so long before, is more modern in its language than the 'New Year's Gift' of 1562.—3. The talents of Alexander Scot were not equal to that composition, as his poems bear witness.—4. In many parts of 'The Vision' we observe a striking similarity of thought and expression to various passages in Ramsay's poems.(2)

(1) 'Observations on the Vision,' in Transactions of the Society of Scottish Antiquarians, vol. i.

(2) "Sayd Fere: 'Let nocht thy heart affray,
I come to hear thy plaint:
Thy graining and maining
Hath lately reik'd mine eir;

'The Vision' has great poetical merit. The allegorical personage of the genius of Scotland is drawn with great power of imagination and characteristic propriety of attribute. The sentiments are suitable to the dignity of the theme, and the diction is highly energetic. It is a pity that the poem is not possessed of uniform excel-

Debar then afar then
All eiriness and feir.'"
Vision, st. 6.

Again: "Rest but a while content,
Nocht feirful, but cheirful,
And wait the will of Fate."
Ibid. st. 11.

"Mair speir na, and feir na,
But set thy mind at rest;
Aspire ay still higher ay,
And always hope the best."
Response of the Oracle to the Poet's Wish.

"I vissy't him then round about."
Vision, st. 7.

——"please to step in,
And vissy't round and round."
Gent. Shep. act. 3. *sc.* 2. *prol.*

"For aften far abufe the mune
We watching beings do convene."
Vision, st. 12.

——"He's seeing a' that's done
In ilka place beneath or yont the mune."
Gent. Shep. act. 3. *sc.* 2.

——"Or all rin richt again."
Vision, st. 15.

——"To gar the bowls row richt."
Gent. Shep. act. 2. *sc.* 4.

"Syne byndging and whyndging,
Quhen thus redusit to howps,
They dander and wander
About poor lickmadowps."
Vision, st. 23.

"He gangs about sornan frae place to place,
As scrimpt of manners as of sense and grace;
Oppressing a' in punishment of their sin,
That are within his tenth degree of kin."
Gent. Shep. act. 3. *sc.* 4.

lence. In the description of the carousal of the gods, the author has indulged his talent for the ludicrous at the expense of his propriety.

A few of the poems of Ramsay are written, as we have before remarked, in what may properly be termed English verse. It is in these attempts—which are generally of a graver species of composition than is suitable to his genius—that our Scottish poet chiefly fails. He is evidently not at his ease. He is in a dress of ceremony; and, from want of use, he feels it sit awkwardly upon him. He is constantly falling back into his accustomed habits. He mistakes the quantities, and sometimes the proper sense of English words; as we may see in his 'Content,' and in his poem on 'Friendship.' When he clothes the same sentiment in Scottish and in English phraseology, its inferiority in the latter dress is most remarkably conspicuous. Thus, in the beautiful dialogue between Peggy and Jenny in 'The Gentle Shepherd,' the latter paints, with genuine humour, the distresses incident to a married life:

"O 'tis a pleasant thing to be a bride!
Syne whinging gets about your ingle-side,
Yelping for this or that wi' fasheous din;
To make them brats then ye man toil and spin;

"But now it's tyme for me to draw
My shynand sword against club-law,
And gar my lion rore."
Vision, st. 24.

"But now again the lion rares,
And joy spreads o'er the plain."
Gent. Shep. act. 3. *sc.* 2.

——"The victor proudly cracks,
He has blawn out our lamp."
Vision, st. 8.

"For without oil our lamp will
Gae blinkan out."
Edinburgh's Salutation, &c.

Ae wean fa's sick,—ane scads itsell wi' brue,—
Ane breaks his shin,—another tines his shoe;
The de'il gangs o'er Jack Webster, hame grows hell,
And Pate miscaws you war than tongue can tell!"

In the poem entitled 'Content,' we find the same sentiment in English; but how poor, how mean, in comparison is the expression!

"The pregnant matron's grief as much prevails;
Some of the children always something ails;
One boy is sick, t' other has broke his head;
And nurse is blamed when little miss is dead."

Yet, from this censure of his pieces in English verse, we must except the poem entitled 'Health,' which is a composition of superior merit. Its form is that of satire; and its purpose is to inculcate the attainment and preservation of the inestimable blessing of health, by the delineation of a series of characters, in which the effects of sloth, effeminacy, gluttony, ebriety, and every species of debauchery, are contrasted with those of activity, temperance, and sobriety. The effects of the passions on the bodily temperature are likewise judiciously estimated; the peevish, the envious, and the malignant characters, are opposed to the cheerful, the contented, and the benevolent; and the preservation of a just equilibrium of mind, and benignity of heart, is shown to be eminently promotive of the vigour of the animal frame. The characters are drawn with a bold spirit and a powerful hand; while the satire has all the keenness of the Juvenalian school.

Of lyric poetry, one of the most difficult species is the song. It is one of those mental exertions, that require not so much a superiority either of genius, or of poetic fancy, as a certain native address: so, in the intercourse of life, there is an elegance of manner which pleases in-

dependently either of worth or ability. Some of the best songs in the English language were written by contemporaries and countrymen of Ramsay; by Crawfurd, Hamilton of Bangour, and Lord Binning: for we have nothing more perfect, in that species of composition, than 'Tweedside,' 'What beauties does Flora disclose;' —'Go, plaintive sounds;'—and, 'Did ever swain a nymph adore.'—The elegant author of 'Essays on Song-writing' has arranged his collection under three different classes, —ballad and pastoral,—passionate and descriptive,—ingenious and witty. As the talents of Ramsay were conspicuous in all of these departments, it might be presumed that he should particularly excel in song composition. And in reality he has displayed, in that species of writing, a high portion of merit; though perhaps not reaching that degree of eminence at which other writers, who are in other respects of inferior talents, have arrived. This appears to have arisen from his haste rather than his incapacity to give his compositions that perfect polish which seems to be particularly requisite in a song. Phillips has observed justly, that "a song loses all its lustre, if it be not polished with the greatest accuracy. The smallest blemish in it, like a flaw in a jewel, takes off the whole value of it. A song is as it were a little image in enamel, that requires all the nice touches of the pencil,—a gloss and a smoothness,—with those delicate finishing strokes,—which would be superfluous and thrown away upon larger figures, where the strength and boldness of a masterly hand gives all the grace."(1) This delicate finishing Ramsay's hasty pencil could not always bestow: yet, as the beauty and propriety of sentiment are still more material than the elegance of the dress,

(1) Guardian, No. 16.

Scribendi recte, sapere principium,—

we find many of his songs, wherein there is everything to praise in the thought, and fortunately very little in the expression that diminishes its power of pleasing. An excellent judge (1) has declared his opinion, that "'The Lass of Patie's Mill'—'The Yellow-hair'd Laddie'—'Farewell to Lochaber'—and some others, must be allowed to be equal to any, and superior, in point of pastoral simplicity, to most lyric productions, either in the Scottish, or in any other language." Among those others, I would mention, 'The last Time I came o'er the Moor,'—'Bessy Bell and Mary Gray,'—'Now wat ye wha I met yestreen,'—'Through the Wood Laddie,'—'The Highland Laddie,'—'My Patie is a Lover gay.' His ballad on 'Bonny Kate,' (Lady Catharine Cochran,) which is written in the stanza of Shenstone, has uncommon vigour and hilarity, propriety and polish. Such then are the lyric merits, which, notwithstanding their attendant imperfections, must for ever give Ramsay a very high place among the writers of Scottish and English song.

In the year 1725, Ramsay published his pastoral comedy of 'The Gentle Shepherd,' the noblest and most permanent monument of his fame. A few years before, he had published, in a single sheet, 'A Pastoral Dialogue between Patie and Roger,' which was reprinted in the first collection of his poems, in 1721. This composition being much admired, his literary friends urged him to extend his plan to a regular drama; and to this fortunate suggestion the literary world is indebted for one of the most perfect pastoral poems that has ever appeared.(2)

(1) Mr. Ritson, who, besides other ingenious works, has favoured the public with two admirable collections of English, and of Scottish, songs and melodies.

(2) In the quarto of 1728, the following note is subjoined to the first

The pastoral drama is an invention of the moderns. The first who attempted this species of poetry was Agostino de Beccari, in his 'Sacrificio Favola Pastorale,' printed in 1553. Tasso is supposed to have taken the hint from him; and is allowed, in his 'Aminta,' published in 1573, to have far surpassed his master. Guarini followed, whose 'Pastor Fido' contends for the palm with the 'Aminta,' and, in the general opinion of the Italians, is judged to have obtained it. Tasso himself is said to have confessed the superior merit of his rival's work; but to have added, in his own defence, that had Guarini never seen his 'Aminta,' he never would have surpassed it. Yet, I think, there is little doubt, that this preference is ill-founded. Both these compositions have resplendent beauties, with glaring defects and improprieties. I am, however, much mistaken, if the latter are not more abundant in the 'Pastor Fido,' as the former are predominant in the 'Aminta.' Both will ever be admired for beauty of poetical expression, for rich imagery, and for detached sentiments of equal delicacy and tenderness; but the fable, both of the 'Aminta,' and 'Pastor Fido,' errs against all probability; and the general language and sentiments of the characters are utterly remote from nature. The fable of the 'Aminta' is not dramatic; for it is such, that the principal incidents, on which the plot turns, are incapable of representation. The beautiful Silvia, stripped naked, and bound by her hair to a tree by a brutal satyr, and released by her lover Amyntas;—her flight from the wolves;—the precipitation of Amyntas from a high rock, who narrowly escapes being dashed in pieces, by having his fall broken

scene of 'The Gentle Shepherd:'—"This first scene is the only piece in this volume that was printed in the first. Having carried the pastoral the length of five acts, at the desire of some persons of distinction, I was obliged to print this preluding scene with the rest."

by the stump of a tree ;—are all incidents, incapable of being represented to the eye ; and must therefore be thrown into narration. The whole of the last act is narrative, and is taken up entirely with the history of Amyntas's fall, and the happy change produced in the heart of the rigorous Silvia, when she found her lover thus miraculously preserved from the cruel death, to which her barbarity had prompted him to expose himself.

Yet, the fable of the ' Aminta,' unnatural and undramatic as it is, has the merit of simplicity. That of the ' Pastor Fido,' equally unnatural and incredible, has the additional demerit of being complicated as well as absurd. The distress of Amyntas, arising from an adequate and natural cause—rejected love, excites our sympathy ; but the distress in the ' Pastor Fido ' is altogether chimerical ; we have no sympathy with the calamities arising from the indignation of Diana, or the supposed necessity of accomplishing the absurd and whimsical response of an oracle. We cannot be affected by the passions of fictitious beings. The love of a satyr has nothing in it but what is odious and disgusting.

The defects of these celebrated poems have arisen from the erroneous idea entertained by their authors, that the province of this species of poetry was not to imitate nature, but to paint that chimerical state of society, which is termed "the golden age." Mr. Addison, who, in the ' Guardian,' has treated the subject of pastoral poetry at considerable length, has drawn his critical rules from that absurd principle ; for he lays it down as a maxim, that, to form a right judgment of pastoral poetry, it is necessary to cast back our eyes on the first ages of the world, and inquire into the manners of men, "before they were formed into large societies, cities built, or commerce established.—A state," says he, "of

ease, innocence, and contentment; where plenty begot pleasure, and pleasure begot singing, and singing begot poetry, and poetry begot singing again." A description this, which is so fantastical, as would almost persuade us that the writer meant to ridicule his own doctrine, if the general strain of his criticism did not convince us it was seriously delivered. Is it necessary to prove, that this notion of pastoral poetry, however founded in the practice of celebrated writers, has no foundation in fact, no basis in reason, nor conformity to good sense? To a just taste, and unadulterated feelings, the natural beauties of the country, the simple manners, rustic occupations, and rural enjoyments of its inhabitants, brought into view by the medium of a well-contrived dramatic fable, must afford a much higher degree of pleasure than any chimerical fiction, in which Arcadian nymphs and swains hold intercourse with Pan and his attendant fauns and satyrs. If the position be disputed, let 'The Gentle Shepherd' be fairly compared with the 'Aminta,' and 'Pastor Fido.'

The story of 'The Gentle Shepherd' is fitted to excite the warmest interest, because the situations into which the characters are thrown, are strongly affecting, whilst they are strictly consonant to nature and probability. The whole of the fable is authorized by the circumstances of the times, in which the action of the piece is laid. The era of Cromwell's usurpation, when many a loyal subject, sharing the misfortunes of his exiled sovereign, were stripped of their estates, and then left to the neglect and desolation of forfeiture; the necessity under which those unhappy sufferers often lay, of leaving their infant progeny under the charge of some humble but attached dependent, till better days should dawn upon their fortunes; the criminal advantages taken by false friends in usurping the rights of the sufferers, and se-

curing themselves against future question by deeds of guilt; these circumstances, too well founded in truth and nature, are sufficient to account for every particular in this most interesting drama, and give it perfect verisimilitude.

The fables of the 'Aminta' and 'Pastor Fido,' drawn from a state of society which never had an existence, are, for that reason, incapable of exciting any high degree of interest; and the mind cannot for a moment remain under the influence of that deception which it is the great purpose of the drama to produce.

The characters or persons of the Italian pastorals are coy nymphs and swains, whose sole occupation is hunting wild beasts,—brutal satyrs who plot against the chastity of those nymphs,—shepherds deriving their origin from the gods,—stupid priests of these gods who are the dupes of their ambiguous will,—and gods themselves disguised like shepherds, and influencing the conduct and issue of the piece. The manners of these unnatural and fictitious beings are proper to their ideal character. A dull moralizing chorus is found necessary to explain what the characters themselves must have left untold, or unintelligible.

The persons of the Scottish pastoral are the actual inhabitants of the country where the scene is laid; their manners are drawn from nature with a faithful pencil. The contrast of the different characters is happily imagined, and supported with consummate skill. Patie, of a cheerful and sanguine temperament; spirited, yet free from vain ambition; contented with his humble lot; endowed by nature with a superior understanding, and feeling in himself those internal sources of satisfaction, which are independent of the adventitious circumstances of rank and fortune. Roger, of a grave and phlegmatic constitution; of kind affections, but of that ordinary

turn of mind which is apt to suppose some necessary connection between the possession of wealth and felicity. The former, from native dignity of character, assuming a bold pre-eminence, and acting the part of a tutor and counsellor to his friend, who bends, though with some reluctance, to the authority of a nobler mind. The principal female characters are contrasted with similar skill, and equal power of discrimination. Peggy, beautiful in person as in mind, endowed with every quality that can adorn the character of woman; gentle, tender-hearted, constant in affection, free from vanity as from caprice; of excellent understanding; judging of others by the criterion of her own innocent mind, and therefore forming the most amiable views of human nature. Jenny, sensible and affectionate, sprightly and satirical; possessing the ordinary qualities of her sex, self-love, simulation, and the passion of conquest; and pleased with exercising a capricious dominion over the mind of a lover; judging of mankind rather from the cold maxims of instilled prudential caution, than from the native suggestions of the heart.—A contrast of characters strongly and skilfully opposed, and therefore each most admirably fitted to bring the other into full display.

The subordinate persons of the drama are drawn with equal skill and fidelity to their prototypes. Glaud and Symon are the genuine pictures of the old Scottish yeomanry,—the Lothian farmers of the last age, in their manners, sentiments, and modes of life; humble, but respectable; homely, yet comfortable. The episode of Bauldy, while it gives a pleasing variety, without interrupting the principal action, serves to introduce a character of a different species, as a foil to the honest and simple worth of the former. It paints in strong colours, and exposes to merited reprobation and contempt, that low and sordid mind which seeks alone the gratification

of its own desires though purchased by the misery of the object of its affection. Bauldy congratulates himself on the cruel disappointment of Peggy's love ;—"I hope we'll a' sleep sound, but ane, this night;"—and judges her present situation of deep distress to be the most favourable moment for preferring his own suit. His punishment, as it is suitable to his demerits, gives entire satisfaction.

The 'Aminta,' and 'Pastor Fido,' abound in beautiful sentiments, and passages of the most tender and natural simplicity; but it is seldom we find a single page in which this pleasing impression is not effaced by some affected and forced conceit. Nothing can be more delicately beautiful, or more agreeable to the true simplicity of pastoral, than Amyntas's recounting to Tircis the rise of his passion for Silvia :

AMINTA.

Essendo io fanciulletto, sicche appena
Giunger potea con la man pargoletta,
A corre i frutti da i piegati rami
De gli arboscelli, intrinseco divenni
De la pui vaga e cara verginella,
Che mai spiegasse al vento chioma d' oro—
Congiunti eran gli alberghi,
Ma piu congiunti i cori:
Seco tendeva insidie con le reti
Ai pesci ed a gli augelli, &c.

The description of their joint occupations and sports, till love insensibly rose in the breast of Tircis ; the natural and innocent device he employed to obtain a kiss from Silvia ; the discovery of his affection, and his despair on finding her heart insensible to his passion, are proofs that Tasso was a true poet, and knew to touch those strings, with which our genuine feelings must ever harmonize. In elegant and just description he is equally

to be admired. The scene in which Tircis describes the lovely Silvia bound naked to a tree by a brutal satyr, and released by Amyntas, whose passion she treated with scorn, is one of the most beautiful pieces of poetic painting:

——— egli rivolse
I cupidi occhi in quelle membra belle
Che come suole tremolare il latte
Ne' giunche, (1) si parean morbide e bianche.

But, when Amyntas, unloosing his disdainful mistress, addresses himself to the tree to which she was tied, when he declares its rugged trunk to be unworthy of the bonds of that beautiful hair which encircled it, and reproaches its cruelty in tearing and disfiguring those charming tresses, we laugh at such despicable conceits, and lament that vicious taste, to which even a true poet found himself (we presume against his better judgment) so often compelled to sacrifice. So likewise when, forgetting nature, he resorts to the ordinary cant of pastoral, the language and thoughts of Theocritus and Virgil, and even superadds to those common-places, the false refinement which in his age delighted his countrymen, we turn with dissatisfaction from his page. If we compare him, where the similarity of the subject allows a comparison, with the Scottish poet, how poor does the Italian appear in the competition!

Thus, let the first scene of the 'Aminta,' between Silvia and Dafne, be compared with the scene between Jenny and Peggy, in 'The Gentle Shepherd.' The subject of both is the preference between a single and a married life:

(1) To understand this beautiful figure, it is necessary to know, that the Italian peasants carry the curdled milk to market in baskets closely woven of green rushes. Hence a country treat is called *giuncata;* and hence the English *junket.*

DAFNE.

Onde nasce il tuo odio?

SILVIA.

Dal suo amore.

DAFNE.

Piacevol padre de figlio crudele.
Ma quando mai da' mansueti agnelli
Nacquer le tigri? O da i bei cigni i corvi?
O me inganni, O te stessa.

SILVIA.

Odio il suo amore,
Ch' odia la mia onestade—

DAFNE.

Hor rispondimi almen, s' altri t' amasse,
Gradiresti il suo amore in questa guisa?

SILVIA.

In questa guisa gradirei ciascuno
Insidiator di mia verginitate,
Che tu dimandi amante, ed io nemico.

DAFNE.

Stimi dunque
Il monton de l' agnella?
De la giovenca il toro?
Stimi dunque nemico
Il tortore a la fida tortorella?
Stimi dunque stagione
De nemicitia e d' ira
La dolce primavera,
Ch' or allegra e ridente
Riconsiglia ad amare
Il mondo egli animali,
Egli huomini e le donne? E non t' accorgi
Comme tutte le cose
Or sono innamorate
D' un amor pien di gioia e di salute?
Mira là quel colombo,
Con che dolce susurro lusingando,

Bacia la sua campagna:
Odi quel usignŭolo,
Che va di ramo in ramo,
Cantando, io amo, io amo: e se no'l sai,
La biscia lascia il suo veleno, e corre
Cupida al suo amatore:
Van le tigri in amore:
Ama il leon superbo: e tu sol, fiera
Piu che tutte le fere,
Albergo gli dineghi nel suo petto.
Ma che dico leoni, e tigri, e serpi,
Che pur an sentimento? Amano ancora
Gli alberi. Vederi puoi con quanto affetto
E con quanti iterati abbraciamenti
La vite s'avviticchia al suo marito;
L' abete ama l' abete, il pino il pino,
L' orno per l' orno, e per lo salce il salce,
E l' un per l' altro faggio arde e sospira, &c.

SILVIA.

Or su quando i sospiri
Udiro de le piante,
Io son contenta allor d' esser amante.

Aminta, att. 1. *sc.* 1.

Thus translated:

DAPHNE.

But whence can spring thy hate?

SILVIA.

Whence? from his love.

DAPHNE.

Too cruel offspring of so kind a sire!
When was it heard that e'er the tender lamb
Produced a tiger, or the rook a swan?—
Sure you deceive yourself, or jest with me.

SILVIA.

How can I choose but hate his love,
Which hates my chastity?

DAPHNE.

Now tell me, should another thus address thee,
Would'st thou in such harsh kind receive his love?

SILVIA.

In such harsh kind I ever would receive
The traitor who would steal my virgin jewel:
Whom you term lover I account a foe.

DAPHNE.

Thus to the ewe the ram
Thou deem'st a foe; or to the tender heifer,
The sturdy bull; the turtle to its mate.
Thus the delightful spring
Seems in thy mind the season of fell hate,
And deadly enmity; the lovely spring
That smiling prompts to universal love,
That rouses nature's flame through all her bounds:
Nor less in animals of every kind,
Than favour'd man. See how creation glows,
In all her works, with love's imperious flame!
Mark yonder doves that bill, and sport, and kiss:
Hear'st thou the nightingale, as on the bough
She evermore repeats, "I love, I love:"
The wily snake sheaths her envenomed fang,
And sinuous glides her to her glossy mate:
The savage tiger feels the potent flame:
The grim majestic lion growls his love
To the resounding forest.—Wilder thou
Than nature's wildest race, spurn'st at that power
To which all nature bows.—But why of these,
Of the grim lion, or the spotted lynx,
Or wily serpent?—these have sense and feeling.
Even trees inanimate confess the god:
See how the vine clings with a fond embrace;
The mountain fir, the pine, the elm, the beech,
Have each their favour'd mate: they burn, they sigh, &c.

SILVIA.

Well, when my ears shall hear their sighs of love,
Perhaps I too may learn to love like them.

By a similar strain of argument, Linco, in the 'Pastor Fido,' endeavours to persuade Silvio to love, whose sole delight is in the chase, and who tells his adviser, that he would not give one wild beast, taken by his dog Melampo, for a thousand beautiful nymphs. Linco bids him "See how all nature loves, the heavens, the earth, the sea; and that beautiful morning star that now shines so bright, she likewise loves, and shines more splendid from her amorous flame: see how she blushes, for now perhaps she has just left the stolen embraces of her lover. The woods, and all their savage inhabitants, the seas, the dolphins, the huge whales," &c., &c.

How poor is all this refinement and conceit, when compared with the language of truth and nature! When Peggy, in the confidence of a warm and innocent heart, describes to her companion the delights of a mutual passion, the enjoyments of domestic bliss, and the happiness arising from the exercise of the parental duties and affections; contrasting these with the cold and selfish feelings of determined celibacy, it is nature that speaks in every line, and the heart yields its warmest sympathy as the judgment its complete conviction:

PEGGY.

Sic coarse-spun thoughts as thae want pith to move
My settled mind; I'm o'er far gane in love.
Patie to me is dearer than my breath;
But want of him I dread nae other skaith.
There 's nane of a' the herds that tread the green
Has sic a smile, or sic twa glancing een.
And then he speaks wi' sic a taking art,
His words they thrill like music through my heart;
How blythely can he sport, and gently rave,
And jest at feckless fears that fright the lave!
Ilk day that he 's alane upon the hill,
He reads fell books that teach him meikle skill:

He is—but what need I say that or this,
I'd spend a month to tell you what he is!

To the sarcastical picture which Jenny draws of the anxieties and turmoil of a wedded life, Peggy thus warmly replies:

Yes, it 's a heartsome thing to be a wife,
When round the ingle-edge young sprouts are rife.
Gif I'm sae happy, I shall hae delight
To hear their little plaints, and keep them right.
Wow, Jenny! can there greater pleasure be,
Than see sic wee tots toolying at your knee;
When a' they ettle at, their greatest wish,
Is to be made of, and obtain a kiss?
Can there be toil in tenting day and night
The like of them, when love makes care delight? (1)

JENNY.

But poortith, Peggy, is the warst of a'.
Gif o'er your heads ill-chance should beggary draw:
Your nowt may die; the spate may bear away
Frae aff the howms your dainty rucks of hay;
The thick-blawn wreaths of snaw, or blashy thows,
May smoor your wethers, and may rot your ewes, &c.

PEGGY.

May sic ill luck befa' that silly she
Wha has sic fears, for that was never me!
Let folk bode weel, and strive to do their best,
Nae mair 's required; let heaven make out the rest.

(1) When the sentiments are drawn from nature, it is not surprising that, where the subject is similar, there should be a concurrence of thought between two genuine poets, who never saw each other's works. How similar is the following passage of the 10th satire of Boileau to the imagery of this beautiful family picture!

Quelle joie en effet, quelle douceur extreme
De se voir caresser d' une epouse qu'on aime;—
De voir autour de soi croitre dans la maison,
Sous les paisibles loix d' une agréable mere
De petits citoyens dont on croit être pere!
Quel charme au moindre mal qui nous vient menacer
De la voir aussitot accourir, s' empresser, &c.

I 've heard my honest uncle aften say,
That lads should a' for wives that's virtuous pray;
For the maist thrifty man could never get
A weel-stor'd room, unless his wife wad let.
Wherefore nocht shall be wanting on my part,
To gather wealth to raise my shepherd's heart:
Whate'er he wins I'll guide wi' canny care,
And win the vogue at market, tron, or fair,
For halesome, clean, cheap, and sufficient ware.
A flock of lambs, cheese, butter, and some woo',
Shall first be sald to pay the laird his due;
Syne a' behind 's our ain.—Thus, without fear,
Wi' love and rowth we through the warld will steer:
And when my Pate in bairns and gear grows rife,
He 'll bless the day he gat me for his wife.

JENNY.

But what if some young giglet on the green,
Wi' dimpled cheeks, and twa bewitching een,
Should gar your Patie think his half-worn Meg,
And her ken'd kisses, hardly worth a feg?

PEGGY.

Nae mair of that!—Dear Jenny, to be free,
There 's some men constanter in love than we.
Nor is the ferly great, when nature kind
Has blest them with solidity of mind:
They 'll reason calmly, and with kindness smile,
When our short passions would our peace beguile:
Sae whensoe'er they slight their maiks at hame,
'Tis ten to ane the wives are maist to blame.
Then I'll employ wi' pleasure a' my art,
To keep him cheerfu', and secure his heart.
At e'en, when he comes weary frae the hill,
I 'll hae a' things made ready to his will;
In winter, when he toils through wind and rain,
A bleezing ingle, and a clean hearth-stane;
And soon as he flings by his plaid and staff,
The seething pat 's be ready to tak' aff.
Clean hag-a-bag I 'll spread upon his board,
And serve him wi' the best we can afford:

Good-humour and white bigonets shall be
Guards to my face, to keep his love for me.
Act 1. *sc.* 2.

Such are the sentiments of nature; nor is the language in which they are conveyed inadequate to their force and tenderness: for to those who understand the Scottish dialect, the expression will be found to be as beautiful as the thought. It is in those touches of simple nature,—those artless descriptions, of which the heart instantly feels the force, thus confessing their consonance to truth,—that Ramsay excels all the pastoral poets that ever wrote.

Thus Patie to Peggy, assuring her of the constancy of his affection:

I 'm sure I canna change!—Ye need na fear;
Tho' we're but young, I've loo'ed you mony a year.
I mind it weel, whan thou couldst hardly gang,
Or lisp out words, I choos'd you frae the thrang
Of a' the bairns, and led thee by the hand
Aft to the tansy-know, or rashy strand,
Thou smiling by my side:—I took delight
To pou the rashes green wi' roots sae white,
Of which, as well as my young fancy could,
For thee I plet the flow'ry belt and snood.
Act 2. *sc.* 4.

Let this be contrasted with its corresponding sentiment in the 'Pastor Fido,' when Mirtillo thus pleads the constancy of his affection for Amaryllis:

Prima che mai cangiar voglia, O pensiere,
Cangerò vita in morte:
Però che la bellissima Amarylli,
Cosi com' e crudel, com' è spietata,
E sola e la vita mia,
Ne può gia sostener corporea salma,
Più d' un cor, più d' un alma.

"Sooner than change my mind, my darling thought,
Oh may my life be changed into death!"

(and mark the pledge of this assurance)

"For cruel though, though merciless she be,
Yet my whole life is wrapt in Amaryllis;
Nor can the human frame, I think, contain
A double heart at once, a double soul!"

Past. Fid. Act 3. *sc.* 6.

The charm of 'The Gentle Shepherd' arises equally from the nature of the passions, which are there delineated, and the engaging simplicity and truth, with which their effects are described. The poet paints an honourable and virtuous affection between a youthful pair of the most amiable character; a passion indulged on each side from the purest and most disinterested motives, surmounting the severest of all trials—the unexpected elevation of the lover to a rank which, according to the maxims of the world, would preclude the possibility of union; and crowned at length by the delightful and most unlooked for discovery, that this union is not only equal as to the condition of the parties, but is an act of retributive justice. In the anxious suspense that precedes this discovery, the conflict of generous passions in the breasts of the two lovers is drawn with consummate art, and gives rise to a scene of the utmost tenderness and the most pathetic interest. Cold indeed must be that heart, and dead to the finest sensibilities of our nature, which can read without emotion the interview between Patie and Peggy, after the discovery of Patie's elevated birth, which the following lines describe:

PATIE.

——"My Peggy, why in tears?
Smile as ye wont, allow nae room for fears!
Though I'm nae mair a shepherd, yet I'm thine.

PEGGY.

I dare not think sae high!—I now repine
At the unhappy chance that made not me
A gentle match, or still a herd kept thee.
Wha can withoutten pain see frae the coast
The ship that bears his all like to be lost;
Like to carried, by some rever's hand,
Far frae his wishes to some distant land?

PATIE.

Ne'er quarrel fate, whilst it wi' me remains
To raise thee up, or still attend these plains.
My father has forbid our loves, I own;
But love 's superior to a parent's frown:
I falsehood hate!—Come, kiss thy cares away!
I ken to love, as weel as to obey.
Sir William 's generous; leave the task to me,
To make strict duty, and true love agree.

PEGGY.

Speak on, speak ever thus, and still my grief!
But short I dare to hope the fond relief.
New thoughts a gentler face will soon inspire,
That wi' nice air swims round in silk attire;
Then I, poor me! wi' sighs may ban my fate,
When the young laird's nae mair my heartsome Pate.
Nae mair again to hear sweet tales exprest
By the blyth shepherd that excelled the rest;
Nae mair be envied by the tattling gang,
When Patie kiss'd me, when I danc'd or sang;
Nae mair, alake! we 'll on the meadow play,
And rin half breathless round the rucks of hay,
As aft-times I hae fled from thee right fain,
And fawn on purpose that I might be ta'en:
Nae mair around the foggy know I'll creep,
To watch and gaze upon thee while asleep.—
But hear my vow—'t will help to gi'e me ease—
May sudden death, or deadly sair disease,
And warst of ills, attend my wretched life,
If e'er to ane but thee I be a wife!—

PATIE.

Sure heaven approves!—And be assur'd of me,
I 'll ne'er gang back of what I 've sworn to thee;
And time, tho' time man interpose awhile,
And I man leave my Peggy and this isle,
Yet time, nor distance, nor the fairest face,
(If there's a fairer,) e'er shall fill thy place.
I 'd hate my fortune," &c.———

With similar fervent assurances of the constancy of his affection, Patie prevails in calming the agitation of Peggy's mind, and banishing her fears. She declares she will patiently await the happy period of his return, soothing the long interval with prayers for his welfare, and sedulous endeavours to improve and accomplish her mind, that she may be the more worthy of his affection. The scene concludes with an effusion of her heart in a sentiment of inimitable tenderness and beauty:

"With every setting day and rising morn,
I 'll kneel to heaven and ask thy safe return;
Under that tree, and on the suckler brae,
Where aft we wont, when bairns, to rin and play;
And to the hizel-shaw, where first ye vow'd
Ye wad be mine, and I as eithly trow'd,
I 'll aften gang, and tell the trees and flow'rs,
Wi' joy, that they 'll bear witness I am yours."
Act 4. *sc.* 2.

To a passion at once so pure, so delicate, so fervent, and so disinterested in its object, with what propriety may we apply that beautiful apostrophe of Burns, in his 'Cottar's Saturday Night!'

"O happy love! where love like this is found;
O heartfelt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
If heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,

One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the evening gale."

In intimate knowledge of human nature Ramsay yields to few poets either of ancient or of modern times. How naturally does poor Roger conjecture the insensibility of his mistress to his passion, from the following simple, but finely-imagined circumstances:

"My Bawty is a cur I dearly like;
Even while he fawn'd she strake the poor dumb tyke.
If I had fill'd a nook within her breast,
She wad have shawn mair kindness to my beast.
When I begin to tune my stock and horn,
Wi' a' her face she shaws a cauldrife scorn:
Last night I play'd, ye never heard sick spite;
'O'er Bogie' was the tune, and her delight;
Yet tauntingly she at her cousin speer'd,
Gif she could tell what tune I play'd, and sneer'd."
Act 1. *sc.* 1.

The counsel, which Patie gives his friend, to prove with certainty the state of Jenny's affections, is the result of a profound acquaintance with the human heart:

"Daft gowk! leave aff that silly whinging way;
Seem careless; there's my hand ye 'll win the day.
Hear how I serv'd my lass, I love as weel
As ye do Jenny, and wi' heart as leal."

Then follows a picture so natural, and at the same time so exquisitely beautiful, that there is nothing in antiquity that can parallel it:

"Last morning I was gay, and early out;
Upon a dyke I lean'd, glow'ring about;

I saw my Meg come linkan o'er the lee,—
I saw my Meg, but Meggy saw na me;
For yet the sun was wading through the mist,
And she was close upon me ere she wist.
Hir coats were kiltit, and did sweetly shaw
Her straight bare legs that whiter were than snaw;
Her cockernony snooded up fu' sleek,
Her haffet locks hang waving on her cheek;
Her cheeks say ruddy, and her een say clear,
And oh! her mouth like ony hunny pear;
Neat, neat she was in bustine waistcoat clean,
As she came skiffing o'er the dewy green.
Blythsome I cry'd, 'My bonny Meg, come here,
I ferly wherefore ye're sae soon asteer!
But I can guess, ye're gawn to gether dew:'
She scowr'd awa, and said, 'What's that to you?'
'Then fare ye weel, Meg dorts, and e'en's ye like,'
I careless cry'd, and lap in o'er the dyke.
I trow when that she saw, within a crack,
She came wi' a right thieveless errand back;
Misca'd me first; then bade me hound my dog,
To wear up three waff ewes stray'd on the bog.
I leugh, and sae did she; then wi' great haste
I clasp'd my arms about her neck and waist,
About her yielding waist, and took a fowth
Of sweetest kisses frae her glowing mouth:
While hard and fast I held her in my grips,
My very saul came lowping to my lips.
Sair, sair she flet wi' me 'tween ilka smack,
But weel I kend she meant na as she spake.
Dear Roger, when your jo puts on her gloom,
Do ye sae too, and never fash your thumb;
Seem to forsake her, soon she 'll change her mood;
Gae woo anither, and she 'll gang clean wood."

Act 1. *sc.* 1.

If, at times, we discern in the 'Aminta' the proofs of a knowledge of the human heart, and the simple and genuine language of nature, our emotions of pleasure are soon checked by some frivolous stroke of refinement, or some cold conceit. In the 'Pastor Fido,' the latter impres-

sion is entirely predominant, and we are seldom gratified with any thing like a natural or simple sentiment. The character of Silvio, utterly insensible to the charms of beauty or of female excellence, and who repays an ardent passion with insolence and hatred, if it exists at all in nature, is fitted only to excite contempt and detestation. Dorinda's courtship of Silvio is equally nauseous, and the stratagem she employs to gain his love is alike unnatural. She steals and hides his favourite dog Melampo, and then throwing herself in his way while he is whooping after him through the forest, tells him she has found both the dog and a wounded doe, and claims her reward for the discovery. "What shall that be?" says Silvio.—"Only," replies the nymph, "one of those things that your mother so often gives you."—"What," says he, "a box o' the ear?"—"Nay, nay, but," says Dorinda, "does she never give thee a kiss?"—"She neither kisses me, nor wants that others should kiss me."—

SILVIO.

Parla se vuoi
Esser intesa.

DORINDA.

O misera! un di quelli,
Che ti da la tua madre.

SILVIO.

Una guanciata?

DORINDA.

Una guanciata a chi t' adora, Silvio?

SILVIO.

Ma carregia con queste ella sovente
Mi suole.

DORINDA.

Ah so ben io che non è vero;
Etal' hor non ti bacia?

SILVIO.

Nè mi bacia,
Ne vuol ch' altri mi baci.

The dog is produced, and Silvio asks, "Where is the doe?"—"That poor doe," says she, "am I." A petulance which, though rudely, we cannot say is unjustly punished, by Silvio giving a thousand kisses to his dear dog, and leaving the forward nymph, with a flat assurance of his hatred, to ruminate on his scorn and her own indelicacy. If this is nature, it is at least not *la belle nature*.

But the circumstance on which turns the conversion of the obdurate Silvio, bids defiance even to possibility. Hunting in the forest, he holds a long discourse with an echo, and is half-persuaded by the reflected sounds of his own voice, that there is some real pleasure in love, and that he himself must one day yield to its influence. Dorinda clothes herself in the skin of a wolf, and is shot by him with an arrow, mistaking her for that animal. Then all at once he becomes her most passionate lover, sucks out the barb of the arrow with a plaster of green herbs, and swears to marry her on her recovery, which, by the favour of the gods, is fortunately accomplished in an instant.

Equally unnatural with the fable are sentiments of this pastoral. Amaryllis, passionately adored by Mirtillo, and secretly loving him, employs a long and refined metaphysical argument to persuade him, that if he really loves her, he ought to love her virtue; and that man's true glory lies in curbing his appetites. The moral chorus seems to have notions of love much more consonant to human nature, who discourses for a quarter of an hour on the different kinds of kisses, and the supreme pleasure felt when they are the expression of a mutual passion. But we need no chorus to elucidate *arcana* of this nature.

True it is that in this drama, as in the 'Aminta,' there are passages of such transcendent beauty, of such high poetic merit, that we cannot wonder if, to many readers, they should veil every absurdity of fable or of the general strain of sentiment. For who is there that can read the apostrophe of Amaryllis to the groves and woods, the eulogy of rural life—

Care selve beate, &c.;

the charming address of Mirtillo to the spring—

O primavera gioventi del anno, &c.;

or the fanciful, but inspired description of the age of gold—

O bella età de l' oro! &c.;

who is there that can read these passages without the highest admiration and delight? But it must at the same time be owned that the merit of these Italian poets lies in those highly finished, but thinly sown passages of splendour; and not in the structure of their fables, or the consonance of their general sentiments to truth and nature.

The principal difficulty in pastoral poetry, when it attempts an actual delineation of nature, which we have seen is too seldom its object, lies in the association of delicate and affecting sentiments with the genuine manners of rustic life; an union so difficult to be accomplished, that the chief pastoral poets, both ancient and modern, have either entirely abandoned the attempt, by choosing to paint a fabulous and chimerical state of society; or have failed in their endeavour, either by indulging in such refinement of sentiment as is utterly inconsistent with rustic nature, or by endowing their characters with such a rudeness and vulgarity of manners as is hostile to every

dea of delicacy. It appears to me that Ramsay has most happily avoided these extremes; and this he could the better do from the singularly fortunate choice of his subject. The principal persons of the drama, though trained from infancy in the manners of rustic life, are of generous birth; to whom therefore we may allow, from nature and the influence of blood, an elevation of sentiment, and a nobler mode of thinking than to ordinary peasants. To these characters the poet has therefore, with perfect propriety and knowledge of human nature, given the generous sentiments that accord with their condition, though veiled a little by the manners, and conveyed in the language which suits their accidental situation. The other characters, who are truly peasants, are painted with fidelity from nature; but even of these, the situation chosen by the poet was favourable for avoiding that extreme vulgarity and coarseness of manners which would have offended a good taste. The peasantry of the Pentland hills, within six or seven miles of the metropolis, with which of course they have frequent communication, cannot be supposed to exhibit the same rudeness of manners which distinguishes those of the remote part of the country. As the models, therefore, from which the poet drew were cast in a finer mould than mere provincial rustics, so their copies, as drawn by him, do not offend by their vulgarity, nor is there any greater degree of rusticity than what merely distinguishes their mode of life and occupations.

In what I have said of the manners of the characters in 'The Gentle Shepherd,' I know that I encounter the prejudices of some Scottish critics, who, allowing otherwise the very high merits of Ramsay as a poet, and giving him credit in particular for his knowledge of human nature, and skill to touch the passions, quarrel with him only on the score of his language; as they seem to annex

inseparably the idea of coarseness and vulgarity to every thing that is written in the native dialect of their country: but of this I have said enough before. To every Englishman, and, I trust, to every Scotsman not of fastidious refinement, the dialect of 'The Gentle Shepherd' will appear to be most perfectly consonant to the characters of the speakers, and the times in which the action is laid. To this latter circumstance the critics I have just mentioned seem not to have been sufficiently attentive. The language of this pastoral is not precisely the Scottish language of the present day: the poet himself spoke the language of the beginning of the century, and his persons were of the age preceding that period. To us their dialect is an antiquated tongue, and as such it carries with it a Doric simplicity. But when we consider both the characters and the times, it has an indispensable propriety; and to have given the speakers in 'The Gentle Shepherd' a more refined and polished dialect, or a more modern tone of conversation, would have been a gross violation of truth and nature.

In the faithful painting of rustic life, Ramsay seems to have been indebted to his own situation and early habits, as well as to the want of a learned education. He was familiarly acquainted with rural nature from actual observation; and his own impressions were not weakened or altered by much acquaintance with the classical common-places, or with those artificial pictures which are presented by the poets.(1) It is not therefore the general

(1) So little has Ramsay borrowed from the ordinary language of pastoral, which is generally a tame imitation of the dialogue of Virgil and Theocritus, that in the whole of the Scottish poem there are (I think) only three passages that bring to mind those common-places which, in the eclogues of Pope, we find almost in every line:

> "The bees shall loathe the flower and quit the hive,
> The saughs on boggy ground shall cease to thrive,
> Ere scornful queans, &c."
>
> *Act* 1. *sc.* 1.

characters of the country, which one poet can easily draw from the works of others, that we find in his pastoral; it was the country in which he lived, the genuine manners of its inhabitants, the actual scenes with which he was conversant, that fixed his observation, and guided his imitative pencil. The character which, in the preface to his Evergreen, he assigns to the Scottish poetry in general, is in the most peculiar manner assignable to his own:—"The morning rises in the poet's description, as she does in the Scottish horizon. We are not carried to Greece and Italy for a shade, a stream, or a breeze; the groves rise in our own valleys, the rivers flow from our own fountains, and the winds blow upon our own hills." Ramsay's landscapes are drawn with the most characteristic precision: we view the scene before us, as in the paintings of a Claude or a Waterloo; and the hinds and shepherds of the Pentland hills, to all of whom this delightful pastoral is as familiar as their catechism, can trace the whole of its scenery in nature, and are eager to point out to the inquiring stranger—the waterfall of Habbie's how—the cottages of Glaud and Symon—"Sir William's (1) ancient tower," ruinated in the civil wars, but since rebuilt—the "auld avenue" and "shady groves," still remaining in defiance of the modern taste for naked, shadeless lawn. And here let it be remarked,—as perhaps the surest criterion of the merit of this pastoral as

> "I 've seen with shining fair the morning rise,
> And soon the sleety clouds mirk a' the skies;
> I 've seen the silver spring a while rin clear,
> And soon in mossy puddles disappear;
> The bridegroom may rejoice, &c."
>
> *Act* 3. *sc.* 3.

> "See yon twa elms that grow up side by side,
> Suppose them some years syne bridegroom and bride, &c."
>
> *Act* 1. *sc.* 2.

(1) Sir William Purves of Woodhouselee, whose estate was forfeited by the Protector, for his adherence to the royal cause: he regained it at the Restoration, and was appointed king's solicitor.

a true delineation of nature,—that it is universally relished and admired by that class of people whose habits of life and manners are there described. Its sentiments and descriptions are in unison with their feelings. It is recited, with congenial animation and delight, at the fireside of the farmer, when in the evening the lads and lasses assemble to solace themselves after the labours of the day, and share the rustic meal. There is not a milk-maid, a plough-boy, or a shepherd, of the Lowlands of Scotland, who has not by heart its favourite passages, and can rehearse its entire scenes. There are many of its couplets that, like the verses of Homer, are become proverbial, and have the force of an adage, when introduced in familiar writing, or in ordinary conversation.

I HAVE thus endeavoured to accomplish what I proposed in the beginning of this essay, which was, by an examination of the writings of Ramsay, to ascertain the character of his genius, and vindicate his title to that rank which, I conceive, it is his right to hold among our classical poets. I have shown that his genius was original, inasmuch as he drew from nature, with a vivid imagination and a vigorous pencil; that he inherited, in an uncommon measure, the knowledge of the human heart, the detail of life and manners; and though more prone to discern the weaknesses of mankind, the mean and the absurd in human conduct, and to apply to them the scourge of satire, yet, that he possessed the power of touching the finer passions, and was eminently skilled in the pathetic of nature. Of his power of invention, the drama of 'The Gentle Shepherd,' and his 'Comic Tales,' afford indisputable evidence; as does 'The Vision,' of his imagination. In variety of talents he yields to few poets either of ancient or of modern times.

The writings of Ramsay, as of every uncultivated ge-

nius, abound with blemishes. Even 'The Gentle Shepherd,' tender and affecting as it is in the general strain of its sentiments, displays some strokes of coarseness; and his smaller pieces are frequently tarnished with improprieties both of thought and expression. A harsh and fastidious critic may find abundant room to gratify a splenetic disposition; and such will not fail to remark, that, in this short review of his writings, I have been much less solicitous to point out those imperfections of my author, than to display his beauties. I acknowledge the justness of this observation; but I take no blame to myself. On this subject I have ever been of an opinion, —in which I am warranted by the best of the English critics, Dryden and Addison,—that it is much easier, in all works of taste, to discover faults which generally float upon the surface, and are therefore obvious to the meanest understanding, than to discern those beauties which are delicate in their nature, and operate only on our finer sensibilities; and as the task is the nicer so is it incomparably the more pleasing.

I must at the same time observe, that in the preceding observations, the admirers of theoretic and metaphysical criticism will find but little to gratify their prevailing propensity. In judging of the merits of poetry, and of its power to please the imagination or to touch the passions, I cannot help thinking that an appeal to the feelings of mankind is a more sure criterion of excellence or defect, than any process of reasoning, depending on an abstruse analysis of the powers of the mind, or a theory of the passions. We may admire the ingenuity displayed in works of this nature, but we cannot make use of them to regulate our taste. In our judgment of poetry, as of all the works of genius, there is a natural and instantaneous feeling of excellence, and a disapprobation of defect or impropriety, which outruns all reasoning; and which

directs with much more certainty than any conclusions of the understanding. Informed by this unerring monitor, it may be pleasing to find its decisions, on reflecting on the causes and nature of our feelings, approved and warranted by the judgment; but it is not necessary. Our opinion was formed antecedently to that reflection, and is therefore entirely independent of it. If I feel no pleasure in the perusal of a poem, I cannot be persuaded by any subtlety of philosophical argumentation that I ought to have been pleased: if I do feel pleasure, that argument is unnecessary. In a word, that species of abstract reasoning may amuse and even improve the understanding, and as fitted to do so it is a laudable and a manly exercise of our faculties, but it cannot guide the taste. This quality of the mind is a gift of nature. It may be cultivated and improved by exercise upon its objects, but it cannot be created. We cannot acquire taste as we do mathematics or logic, by studying it as a science. No process of reasoning can ever teach the nerves to thrill, the eyes to overflow, or the heart to sympathise. This sensibility is inbred in the mind; it is the *divinæ particula auræ;* and as all true poetry addresses itself to that faculty of our nature, it must be the only sure criterion to judge of its excellence or defects.

VERSES

ADDRESSED TO ALLAN RAMSAY,

ON HIS POEMS.

1721.

FROM J. BURCHET. (1)

Hail, northern bard, thou fav'rite of the Nine!
Bright or as Horace did or Virgil shine:
In ev'ry part of what thou'st done we find
How they, and great Apollo too, have joined
To furnish thee with an uncommon skill,
And with poetic fire thy bosom fill.
Thy 'Morning Interview' throughout is fraught
With tuneful numbers and majestic thought:
And Celia, who her lover's suit disdain'd,
Is by all-powerful gold at length obtain'd.
When winter's hoary aspect makes the plains
Unpleasant to the nymphs and jovial swains,
Sweetly thou dost thy rural couples call
To pleasures known within Edina's wall.
When, Allan, thou, for reasons thou know'st best,
Doom'd busy Cowper to eternal rest,
What mortal could thine el'gy on him read,
And not have sworn he was defunct indeed?
Yet, that he might not lose accustom'd dues,
You rous'd him from the grave to open pews;
Such magic, worthy Allan, hath thy muse!
The experienc'd bawd, in aptest strains thou'st made
Early instruct her pupils in their trade;

(1) [* See Life, *ante*, p. 19.]

Lest, when their faces wrinkled are with age,
They should not cullies as when young engage.
But on our sex why art thou so severe,
To wish for pleasure we may pay so dear?
Suppose that thou had'st, after cheerful juice,
Met with a strolling harlot, wondrous spruce,
And been by her prevail'd with to resort
Where claret may be drunk, or, if not, port;
Suppose, I say, that this thou granted had,
And freedom took with the enticing jade,
Would'st thou not hope some artist might be found
To cure, if aught you ail'd, the smarting wound?
When of the Caledonian garb you sing,
(Which from Tartana's distant clime you bring,)
With how much force you recommend the plaid
To ev'ry jolly swain and lovely maid!
But if, as fame reports, some of those wights
Who canton'd are among the rugged heights,
No breeks put on, should'st thou not them advise
(Excuse me, Ramsay, if I am too nice)
To take, as fitting 'tis, some speedy care
That what should hidden be appears not bare,
Lest damsels, yet unknowing, should by chance
Their nimble ogle t'wards the object glance:
If this thou dost, we, who the south possess,
May teach our females how they ought to dress;
But chiefly let them understand, 'tis meet
They should their legs hide more, if not their feet;
Too much by help of whalebone now displayed,
Ev'n from the duchess to the kitchen-maid;
But with more reason those who give distaste,
When on their uncouth limbs our eyes we cast.
Thy other sonnets in each stanza show
What, when of love you think, thy muse can do;
So movingly thou'st made the am'rous swain
Wish on the moor his lass to meet again,
That I, methinks, find an unusual pain.
Nor hast thou, cheerful bard, exprest less skill,
When the brisk lass you sang of Patie's mill;
Or Susy, whom the lad with yellow hair
Thou 'st made, in soft and pleasing notes, prefer
To nymphs less handsome, constant, gay, and fair.

In lovely strains kind Nancy you address,
And make fond Willy his coy Jean possess;
Which done, thou'st blest the lad in Nelly's arms,
Who long had absent been 'midst dire alarms;
And artfully you've plac'd within the grove
Jamie, to hear his mistress own her love.

A gentle cure you've found for Strephon's breast,
By scornful Betty long deprived of rest:
And when the blissful pairs you thus have crown'd,
You'd have the glass go merrily around,
To shake off care, and render sleep more sound.

Whoe'er shall see, or hath already seen,
Those bonny lines called 'Christ's Kirk on the Green,'
Must own that thou hast, to thy lasting praise,
Deserv'd, as well as royal James, the bays:
'Mong other things, you've painted to the life
A sot unactive lying by his wife,
Which oft 'twixt wedded folks makes woful strife.

When 'gainst the scribbling knaves your pen you drew,
How did'st thou lash the vile presumptuous crew!
Not much fam'd Butler, who had gone before,
E'er ridicul'd his knight or Ralpho more;
So well thou'st done it, equal smart they feel
As if thou'd pierc'd their hearts with killing steel.

They thus subdu'd, you in pathetic rhyme
A subject undertook that's more sublime;
By noble thoughts, and words discreetly joined,
Thou'st taught me how I may contentment find.
And when to Addie's fame you touch the lyre,
Thou sang'st like one of the seraphic choir;
So smoothly flow thy nat'ral rural strains,
So sweetly too you've made the mournful swains
His death lament, what mortal can forbear
Shedding, like us, upon his tomb a tear?

Go on, fam'd bard, thou wonder of our days,
And crown thy head with never-fading bays;
While grateful Britons do thy lines revere,
And value, as they ought, their Virgil here.

FROM C. T.

As once I view'd a rural scene,
With summer's sweet profusely wild,
Such pleasure sooth'd my giddy sense,
I ravish'd stood, while nature smil'd.

Straight I resolv'd, and chose a field
Where all the spring I might transfer;
There stood the trees in equal rows,
Here Flora's pride in one parterre.

The task was done, the sweets were fled,
Each plant had lost its sprightly air,
As if they grudg'd to be confin'd,
Or to their will not matched were.

The narrow scene displeas'd my mind,
Which daily still more homely grew;
At length I fled the loathed sight,
And hied me to the fields a-new.

Here Nature wanton'd in her prime;
My fancy rang'd the boundless waste;
Each different sight pleas'd with surprise;
I welcom'd back the pleasures past.

Thus some who feel Apollo's rage,
Would teach their muse her dress and time,
Till hamper'd so with rules of art,
They smother quite the vital flame.

They daily chime the same dull tone;
Their muse no daring sallies grace,
But stiffly held with bit and curb,
Keeps heavy trot, though equal pace.

But who takes nature for his rule,
Shall by her generous bounty shine;
His easy muse revels at will,
And strikes new wonders every line.

Keep then, my friend, your native guide;
Never distrust her plenteous store;
Ne'er less propitious will she prove
Than now, but, if she can, still more.

FROM C. BECKINGHAM.

Too blindly partial to my native tongue,
Fond of the smoothness of our English song,
At first thy numbers did uncouth appear,
And shock'd the affected niceness of the ear;
Through prejudice's eye each page I see,
Though all were beauties, none were so to me.
Yet sham'd at last, while all thy genius own,
To have that genius hid from me alone,
Resolv'd to find for praise or censure cause,
Whether to join with all, or all oppose,
Careful I read thee o'er and o'er again;—
At length the useful search requites my pain:
My false distaste to instant pleasures turn'd,
As much I envy as before I scorn'd;
And thus, the error of my pride to clear,
I sign my honest recantation here.

FROM JAMES ARBUCKLE.

Dear Allan, who that hears your strains,
Can grudge that you should wear the bays,
When 'tis so long since Scotia's plains
Could boast of such melodious lays!

What though the critics, snarling curs!
Cry out, your Pegasus wants reins;
Bid them provide themselves of spurs,
Such riders need not fear their brains.

A muse that's healthy, fair and sound,
With noble ardour fearless hastes

O'er hill and dale; but carpet-ground
Was ay for tender footed beasts.

E'en let the fustian coxcombs choose
Their carpet-ground; but the green field
Was held a walk for Virgil's muse,
And Virgil was an unco' chield!

Your muse, upon her native stock
Subsisting, raises thence a name;
While they are forc'd to pick the lock
Of other bards, and pilfer fame.

Oft when I read your joyous lines,
So full of pleasant jests and wit,
So blyth and gay the humour shines,
It gives me many a merry fit.

Then when I hear of Maggy's charms,
And Roger tholing sair disdain,
The bonny lass my bosom warms,
And mickle I bemoan the swain:

For who can hear the lad complain,
And not participate and feel
His artless undissembled pain,
Unless he has a heart of steel.

But Patie's wiles and cunning arts
Appease th' imaginary grief,
Declare him well a clown of parts,
And bring the wretched wight relief.

More might be said, but in a friend
Encomiums seem but dull and flat,
"The wise approve, but fools commend;"
A Pope's authority for that.

Else certes 'twere in me unmeet
To grudge the muse's utmost force,
Or spare in such a cause my feet
To clinch at least in praise of yours.

FROM WILLIAM MESTON.

Allow me, Allan, to address thy muse,
A favour greatest kings will not refuse:
Thou who mak'st shepherds nat'rally to vent
Their grief, and with their doleful songs lament
The loss of friendly and beloved swains,
And with their names and praises fill the plains,
Till some hard-hearted mountain feel their care,
And echo back their sorrow through the air;
Take up thy well-tun'd pipe, exert thy skill,
Great bard, lament our neighb'ring shepherd Hill.
Tell how he was belov'd by all the swains,
Who priz'd his friendship, and admir'd his strains.
The list'ning crowd stood silent in a ring,
Watching with greedy ears to hear him sing;
His charming and instructive notes admir'd,
For Hill by great Apollo was inspir'd;
So bright his thoughts, so nervous, and so just,
And well express'd, they pleas'd the nicest gust;
His jolly muse e'en torment could disdain,
Conjure the gout, and sport with racking pain.
Pregnant with Nature's gifts, he could impart
Good sense, without the midwifery of Art;
For what is Art, with all her rigid rules,
But Nature brush'd and furbish'd up in schools,
Whose works we value and admire the more,
The nearer they approach to Nature's shore?
How mean are all the faint essays of Art,
When Nature fails to act her proper part!
Pull up the sluice of some long-gather'd dam,
Whose waters from much diff'ring fountains came,—
The noisy torrent runs with force and haste,
Grating the ear, and nauseous to the taste,
O'erflows the banks, and, where it is gainstood,
Cuts out new channels with its swelling flood;
But mark, you'll find the noisy thing decay,
Sink low right soon, then languish and run dry.
When crystal streams, with their own fountains fed,
With easy winding in their channels led,

Water the flow'rs which on their margins grow,
Drink in their sweets, and equally still flow,
In these the shepherds and the panting swains,
Can quench their thirst, and bathe to ease their pains;
Their murm'ring streams and colour bring delight
To list'ning ears, and gratify the sight.
Such are thy strains, great bard, and such were Hill's;
Thine flow in fuller streams, his ran in rills.

SERIOUS POEMS.

SERIOUS POEMS.

TO THE CRITIC.

Stand, Critic, and, before you read,
Say, are ye free of party-fead?
Or of a saul sae scrimp and rude,
To envy every thing that's good?
And if I should, perhaps, by chance,
Something that's new and smart advance,
Resolve ye not, with scornful snuff,
To say,—"'Tis a' confounded stuff!"
If that's the case, Sir, spare your spite,
For, faith, 'tis not for you I write:
Gae gi'e your censure higher scope,
And Congreve criticise, or Pope;
Young's satires, or Swift's merry smile;
These, these are writers worth your while!
On me your talents wad be lost,
And though you gain a simple boast;
I want a reader wha deals fair,
And not ae real fault will spare;
Yet, with good-humour, will allow
Me praise whene'er 'tis justly due.
Blest be sic readers!—but the rest,
That are with spleen and spite opprest,
May bards arise to gar them pine
To death, with lays the maist divine,
For sma's the skaith they'll get by mine!

How many, and of various natures,
Are on this globe the crowd of creatures!
In Mexiconian forests fly
Thousands that never wing'd our sky;
'Mangst them there's ane of feathers fair,
That in the music bears nae skair,
Only an imitating ranter,
For whilk he bears the name of Taunter.
Soon as the sun springs frae the east,
Upon the branch he cocks his crest,
Attentive, when frae bough and spray
The tunefu' throats salute the day:
The brainless beau attacks them a',
No ane escapes him great or sma';
Frae some he takes the tone and manner,
Frae this a bass, frae that a tenor,
Turns love's saft plaint to a dull bustle,
And sprightly airs to a vile whistle;
Still labouring thus to counterfeit,
He shaws the poorness of his wit.
Anes, when with echo loud the Taunter
Tret with contempt ilk native chanter,
Ane of them says,—"We own 'tis true,
Few praises to our sangs are due;
But pray, Sir, let's have ane frae you."

1721.

TARTANA; OR, THE PLAID.(1)

Ye Caledonian beauties! who have long
Been both the muse and subject of my song,

(1) [* See Remarks, page 59, *ante*.]

Assist your bard, who, in harmonious lays,
Designs the glory of your plaid to raise.
How my fond breast with blazing ardour glows,
Whene'er my song on you just praise bestows!
Phœbus, and his imaginary Nine,
With me have lost the title of divine;
To no such shadows will I homage pay;
These to my real muses shall give way:
My muses who, on smooth meand'ring Tweed,
Stray through the groves, or grace the clover mead;
Or those who bathe themselves where haughty Clyde
Does roaring o'er his lofty cat'racts ride;
Or you who, on the banks of gentle Tay,
Drain from the flow'rs the early dews of May,
To varnish on your cheek the crimson dye,
Or make the white the falling snow outvie;
And you who, on Edina's streets, display
Millions of matchless beauties every day;
Inspir'd by you, what poet can desire
To warm his genius at a brighter fire?
I sing the plaid, and sing with all my skill;
Mount then, O Fancy! standard to my will;
Be strong each thought, run soft each happy line,
That gracefulness and harmony may shine,
Adapted to the beautiful design.
Great is the subject, vast th' exalted theme,
And shall stand fair in endless rolls of fame.
The plaid's antiquity comes first in view,—
Precedence to antiquity is due:
Antiquity contains a certain spell,
To make e'en things of little worth excel;
To smallest subjects gives a glaring dash,
Protecting high-born idiots from the lash;
Much more 'tis valu'd when, with merit plac'd,
It graces merit, and by merit 's grac'd.

O, first of garbs! garment of happy fate!
So long employ'd, of such an antique date!
Look back some thousand years, till records fail
And lose themselves in some romantic tale,
We'll find our godlike fathers nobly scorn'd
To be with any other dress adorn'd,
Before base foreign fashions interwove,
Which 'gainst their int'rest and their brav'ry strove.
'Twas they could boast their freedom with proud Rome,
And, arm'd in steel, despise the senate's doom:
Whilst o'er the globe their eagle they display'd,
And conquer'd nations prostrate homage paid,
They only, they unconquer'd stood their ground,
And to the mighty empire fix'd the bound.
Our native prince who then supply'd the throne
In plaid array'd magnificently shone;
Nor seem'd his purple or his ermine less,
Though cover'd with the Caledonian dress.
In this at court the thanes were gaily clad;
With this the shepherds and the hinds were glad;
In this the warrior wrapt his brawny arms;
With this our beauteous mothers veil'd their charms,
When ev'ry youth and ev'ry lovely maid
Deem'd it a dishabille to want their plaid.
O, heav'ns! how chang'd, how little look their race!
When foreign chains with foreign modes take place;
When East and Western Indies must combine
To deck the fop and make the gewgaw shine!
Thus while the Grecian troops in Persia lay,
And learn'd the habit to be soft and gay,
By luxury unnerv'd they lost the day.
I ask'd Varell, what soldiers he thought best?
And thus he answer'd to my plain request:
"Were I to lead battalions out to war,
And hop'd to triumph in the victor's car,

To gain the loud applause of worthy fame,
And columns rais'd to eternize my name,
I'd choose,—had I my choice,—that hardy race
Who fearless can look terrors in the face;
Who 'midst the snows the best of limbs can fold
In tartan plaids, and smile at chilling cold.
No useless trash should pain my soldier's back;
No canvas tents make loaden axles crack;
No rattling silks I'd to my standards bind,
But bright tartanas waving in the wind;
The plaid alone should all my ensigns be;
This army from such banners would not flee.
These, these were they who, naked, taught the way
To fight with art, and boldly gain the day!"
E'en great Gustavus stood himself amaz'd,
While at their wondrous skill and force he gaz'd.
With such brave troops one might o'er Europe run,
Make out what Richlieu fram'd, and Lewis had begun.

Degen'rate men!—Now, ladies, please to sit,
That I the plaid in all its airs may hit,
With all the powers of softness mixt with wit.

While scorching Titan tawns the shepherd's brow,
And whistling hinds sweat lagging at the plow,
The piercing beams Brucina can defy,
Not sun-burnt she 's, nor dazzled is her eye.
Ugly's the mask; the fan 's a trifling toy
To still at church some girl or restless boy;
Fix'd to one spot 's the pine and myrtle shades;
But on each motion wait th' umbrellian plaids,
Repelling dust when winds disturb the air,
And give a check to ev'ry ill-bred stare.

Light as the pinions of the airy fry
Of larks and linnets who traverse the sky,
Is the tartana, spun so very fine
Its weight can never make the fair repine,

By raising ferments in her glowing blood,
Which cannot be escap'd within the hood;
Nor does it move beyond its proper sphere,
But lets the gown in all its shape appear;
Nor is the straightness of her waist deny'd
To be by ev'ry ravish'd eye survey'd;
For this the hoop may stand at largest bend,
It comes not high, nor can its weight offend.

The hood and mantle make the tender faint,
I 'm pain'd to see them moving like a tent;
By heather-Jenny, in her blanket drest,
The hood and mantle fully are exprest,
Which round her neck with rags is firmly bound,
While heather-besoms loud she screams around.
Was goody Strode so great a pattern? Say,
Are ye to follow when such lead the way?
But know each fair who shall this surtout use,
You 're no more Scots, and cease to be my muse.

The smoothest labours of the Persian loom,
Lin'd in the plaid, set off the beauty's bloom;
Faint is the gloss, nor come the colours nigh,
Tho' white as milk, or dipt in scarlet dye:
The lily pluckt by fair Pringella grieves,
Whose whiter hand outshines its snowy leaves;
No wonder then white silks in our esteem,
Match'd with her fairer face, they sully'd seem.

If shining red Campbella's cheeks adorn,
Our fancies straight conceive the blushing morn,
Beneath whose dawn the sun of beauty lies;
Nor need we light but from Campbella's eyes.

If lin'd with green Stuarta's plaid we view,
Or thine, Ramseia, edg'd around with blue,—
One shows the spring when nature is most kind,
The other heav'n whose spangles lift the mind.

A garden-plot enrich'd with chosen flow'rs,
In sun-beams basking after vernal show'rs,
Where lovely pinks in sweet confusion rise,
And amaranths and eglantines surprise;
Hedg'd round with fragrant briar and jessamine,
The rosy thorn and variegated green;
These give not half that pleasure to the view
As when, Fergusia, mortals gaze on you;
You raise our wonder, and our love engage,
Which makes us curse and yet admire the hedge,—
The silk and tartan hedge, which doth conspire
With you to kindle love's soft spreading fire.
How many charms can ev'ry fair one boast!
How oft 's our fancy in the plenty lost!
These more remote, these we admire the most:
What's too familiar often we despise,
But rarity makes still the value rise.

If Sol himself should shine thro' all the day,
We cloy, and lose the pleasure of his ray;
But if behind some marly cloud he steal,
Nor for some time his radiant head reveal,
With brighter charms his absence he repays,
And ev'ry sun-beam seems a double blaze:
So when the fair their dazzling lustres shroud,
And disappoint us with a tartan cloud,
How fondly do we peep with wishful eye,
Transported when one lovely charm we spy!
Oft to our cost, ah me! we often find
The pow'r of love strikes deep, tho' he be blind;
Perch'd on a lip, a cheek, a chin, or smile,
Hits with surprise, and throws young hearts in jail.

From when the cock proclaims the rising day,
And milk-maids sing around sweet curds and whey,
Till grey-ey'd Twilight, harbinger of night,
Pursues o'er silver mountains sinking light,

I can unwearied from my casements view
The plaid, with something still about it new.
How are we pleas'd when, with a handsome air,
We see Hepburna walk with easy care!
One arm half-circles round her slender waist,
The other like an iv'ry pillar plac'd,
To hold her plaid around her modest face,
Which saves her blushes with the gayest grace;
If in white kids her taper fingers move,
Or, unconfin'd, jet thro' the sable glove.
With what a pretty action Keitha holds
Her plaid, and varies oft its airy folds!
How does that naked space the spirits move,
Between the ruffled lawn and envious glove!
We by the sample, though no more be seen,
Imagine all that's fair within the skreen.
Thus belles in plaids vail and display their charms,
The love-sick youth thus bright Humea warms,
And with her graceful mien her rivals all alarms.
The plaid itself gives pleasure to the sight,
To see how all its sets imbibe the light,
Forming some way, which e'en to me lies hid,
White, black, blue, yellow, purple, green, and red.
Let Newton's royal club through prisms stare,
To view celestial dyes with curious care,
I'll please myself, nor shall my sight ask aid
Of crystal gimcracks to survey the plaid.
How decent is the plaid, when in the pew
It hides th' enchanting fair from ogler's view!
The mind 's oft crowded with ill-tim'd desires
When nymphs unveil'd approach the sacred choirs.
E'en senators who guard the commonweal,—
Their minds may rove:—are mortals made of steel?
The finish'd beaux start up in all their airs,
And search out beauties more than mind their pray'rs.

The wainscot forty-sixes are perplext
To be eclips'd, spite makes them drop the text.
The younger gaze at each fine thing they see;
The orator himself is scarcely free.
Ye then who would your piety express,
To sacred domes ne'er come in naked dress.
The power of modesty shall still prevail;
Then, Scotian virgins, use your native veil.

Thus far young Cosmel read; then star'd and curst,
And ask'd me very gravely, how I durst
Advance such praises for a thing despis'd?
He smiling swore I had been ill advis'd.

"To you," said I, "perhaps this may seem true,
And numbers vast, not fools, may side with you;
As many shall my sentiments approve.
Tell me what 's not the butt of scorn and love?
Were mankind all agreed to think one way,
What would divines and poets have to say?
No ensigns would on martial fields be spread,
And *Corpus juris* never would be read;
We 'd need no councils, parliaments, nor kings,
E'en wit and learning would turn silly things.
You miss my meaning still, I 'm much afraid,
I would not have them always wear the plaid.

"Old Salem's royal sage, of wits the prime,
Said, for each thing there was a proper time.
Night 's but Aurora's plaid, that ta'en away
We lose the pleasure of returning day;
E'en thro' the gloom, when view'd in sparkling skies,
Orbs scarcely seen yet gratify our eyes:
So thro' Hamilla's open'd plaid we may
Behold her heav'nly face and heaving milky way
Spanish reserve, join'd with a Gallic air,
If manag'd well, becomes the Scotian fair."

" Now you say well," said he, " but when's the time
That they may drop the plaid without a crime?"
Then I—
" Lest, O fair nymphs, ye should our patience tire,
And starch reserve extinguish gen'rous fire;
Since heav'n your soft victorious charms design'd
To form a smoothness on the rougher mind;
When from the bold and noble toils of war,
The rural cares, or labours of the bar,
From these hard studies which are learn'd and grave,
And some from dang'rous riding o'er the wave,
The Caledonian manly youth resort
To their Edina, love's great mart and port,
And crowd her theatres with all that grace
Which is peculiar to the Scotian race;
At concert, ball, or some fair's marriage-day,
O then with freedom all that's sweet display:
When beauty's to be judg'd without a vail,
And not its pow'r met out as by retail,
But wholesale all at once to fill the mind
With sentiments gay, soft, and frankly kind,—
Throw by the plaid, and like the lamp of day,
When there 's no cloud to intercept his ray;
So shine Maxella, nor their censure fear,
Who, slaves to vapours, dare not so appear.
On Ida's height, when to the royal swain,
To know who should the prize of beauty gain,
Jove sent his two fair daughters and his wife,
That he might be the judge to end the strife;
Hermes was guide: They found him by a tree,
And thus they spake, with air divinely free:
" Say, Paris, which is fairest of us three?"
To Jove's high queen and the celestial maids,
'Ere he would pass his sentence, cry'd, " No plaids!"

Quickly the goddesses obey'd his call,
In simple nature's dress he view'd them all,
Then to Cytherea gave the golden ball.
Great critics, hail! our dread; whose love or hate
Can, with a frown or smile, give verse its fate;
Attend, while o'er this field my fancy roams,
I 've somewhat more to say, and here it comes.
When virtue was a crime, in Tancred's reign,
There was a noble youth who would not deign
To own for sov'reign one a slave to vice,
Or blot his conscience at the highest price;
For which his death 's devis'd, with hellish art
To tear from his warm breast his beating heart.
Fame told the tragic news to all the fair,
Whose num'rous sighs and groans bound thro' the air;
All mourn his fate, tears trickle from each eye,
Till his kind sister threw the woman by;
She, in his stead, a gen'rous off'ring staid,
And he, the tyrant baulk'd, hid in her plaid.
So when Æneas with Achilles strove,[1]
The goddess-mother hasted from above,
Well seen in fate, prompt by maternal love,
Wrapt him in mist, and warded off the blow
That was design'd him by his valiant foe.
I of the plaid could tell a hundred tales;
Then hear another, since that strain prevails.
The tale no records tell, it is so old;
It happen'd in the easy age of gold,
When am'rous Jove, chief of th' Olympian gods,
Pall'd with Saturnia, came to our abodes,
A beauty-hunting: for, in these soft days,
Nor gods nor men delighted in a chase
That would destroy not propagate their race.

[1] Homer.

Beneath a fir-tree in Glentaner's groves, (1)
Where, ere gay fabrics rose, swains sung their loves,
Iris lay sleeping in the open air,
A bright tartana veil'd the lovely fair:
The wounded god beheld her matchless charms
With earnest eyes, and grasp'd her in his arms.
Soon he made known to her, with gaining skill,
His dignity, and import of his will.
" Speak thy desire," the divine monarch said.
" Make me a goddess," cry'd the Scotian maid;
" Nor let hard fate bereave me of my plaid."—
" Be thou the handmaid to my mighty queen,"
Said Jove; " and to the world be often seen
With the celestial bow, and thus appear
Clad with these radiant colours as they wear."

Now say, my muse, ere thou forsake the field,
What profit does the plaid to Scotia yield?
Justly that claims our love, esteem, and boast,
Which is produc'd within our native coast.
On our own mountains grows the golden fleece,
Richer than that which Jason brought to Greece;
A beneficial branch of Albion's trade,
And the first parent of the Tartan plaid.
Our fair ingenious ladies' hands prepare
The equal threads, and give the dyes with care.
Thousands of artists sullen hours decoy
On rattling looms, and view their webs with joy.

May she be curst to starve in frogland fens,
To wear a fala (2) ragg'd at both the ends.
Groan still beneath the antiquated suit,
And die a maid at fifty-five to boot.
May she turn quaggy fat, or crooked dwarf,
Be ridicul'd while primm'd up in her scarf;

(1) *Glentaner's groves*] A large wood in Aberdeenshire.
(2) *Fala*] A little square cloth worn by the Dutch women.

May spleen and spite still keep her on the fret,
And live till she outlive her beauty's date;
May all this fall, and more then I have said,
Upon that wench who disregards the plaid:
But with the sun let ev'ry joy arise,
And from soft slumbers lift her happy eyes;
May blooming youth be fixt upon her face,
Till she has seen her fourth descending race;
Blest with a mate with whom she can agree,
And never want the finest of bohea;
May ne'er the miser's fears make her afraid,
Who joins with me, with me admires the plaid:
Let bright tartanas henceforth ever shine,
And Caledonian goddesses enshrine. (1)

(1) [* A few years after our poet had sung the praises of the kilt, the plaid, and 'bright tartanas' in general, the Government thought fit to proscribe the use of tartan, by something more than a sumptuary act, as fostering Jacobitism and treason. But could honest Allan have cast a prophetic glance forward another century from the passing of the act of 1747, his spirit would have been more than appeased by the universal popularity which his favourite material has attained in Scotland. Hear the clever editor of 'The Glasgow Citizen' on this subject:—"The Scotch have no longer reason to 'fear the dirk.' At all events, it cannot be alleged against them that they 'scorn the tartan.' Tartan is, in fact, their only wear. Whatever may be the prevailing colour—whether red, green, yellow, or purple, nothing is to be seen but tartan;—tartan shawls, tartan scarfs, tartan dresses, tartan waistcoats, tartan plaids, tartan snuff-boxes, tartan shop-windows, tartan sides of doors, tartan streamers of cloth fluttering from warehouse windows! * * * Let but the reader observe the first woman he meets, and he will find her tartan from head to foot, tartan across and tartan all round. We dare stake long odds on this. Be she lady or lady's maid the result will be the same. High or low, her costume will be found striped and chequed—

'Or diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable, of splendid stains and dyes.'

The tartan worn of a Sunday by any single congregation might suffice to carpet the church and clothe the steeple. Our wives are Helen Macgregors, and our children juvenile Rob Roys. Piano-stools creak under the gentle burden of Flora Macdonalds. On lonely moors by night, 'the garb of old Gaul' battles with the blast; under the blaze of gaseliers it decorates the bosom of beauty. Precisely one hundred years ago, when the war of the Government against the smouldering spirit of Jacobitism had caused all sorts of tartans to be proscribed by law, the public could not have 'donned their clothes,' as they now do, without rendering themselves

Fair judges, to your censure I submit:
If you allow this poem to have wit,
I 'll look with scorn upon these musty fools
Who only move by old worm-eaten rules.
But with th' ingenious if my labours take,
I wish them ten times better for their sake.
Who shall esteem this vain are in the wrong,
I 'll prove the moral is prodigious strong:
I hate to trifle, men should act like men,
And for their country only draw their sword and pen.

liable to seven years' transportation! Were the act of 1747 suddenly revived, not a third of the community durst proceed in their morning toilet beyond their mere under garments. People would be only legal in their beds. How much more, too, would the law which refused to permit a paltry kilt, be apt to hurl its thunders against a completed petticoat! Fortunately, however, our tartans no longer exhibit the *cath-dath*, or battle-colours of the clans. They are the most peaceable and brotherly of tartans. In them the ancient symbols of feud are wedded in perpetual amity. The red of the Stuarts and the Macgregors is interwoven with the green of the Ranalds and the Macdonalds—the dark hue of the Macfarlanes and the Douglases enters into sweet and harmonious relationship with the yellow of the Macleods and the Maclachlans, and the purple of the Mackays and the Ogilvies. Virtually, it is as if the 'Greedy Campbells' were to hob-nob with the 'Dirty Dalrymples,' or the 'Wild Macraws' to lose their identity in intercourse with the 'Mucklemou'd Murrays.' Modern pattern-drawers are no longer votaries of Flora. Such a confounding of the clans as they have achieved could never have been effected by the most stern of legislative decrees, or the most cruel of penal enactments. Nevertheless, the tartans now universal have only lost their individual, not their generic character. They are still tartans. It is as if the *breacan* of the different clans had been lodged like bits of coloured glass in a kaleidoscope, and transformed into novel combinations, and blended into accidental harmonies. Formerly they were the livery of families or septs; now they form the garb of the nation. * * * The fancy-tartan age will become as familiar to our grandchildren as the Elizabethan is to ourselves; so that should the next century give a second Sir Walter Scott to the world, to record the loves, the strifes, and the adventures of our picturesque time, he will be saved the necessity, provided he only furnish his readers with a swatch of our costume, of inscribing as the title of his work, the chronological information—'Tis Sixty Years Since.'"]

1718.

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH'S ADDRESS TO THE COUNTRY.(1)

From me, Edina, to the brave and fair,
Health, joy, and love, and banishment of care.
Forasmuch as bare fields and gurly skies
Make rural scenes ungrateful to the eyes,
When hyperborean blasts confound the plain,
Driving, by turns, light snow and heavy rain;
Ye swains and nymphs, forsake the wither'd grove,
That no damp colds may nip the buds of love;
Since winds and tempests o'er the mountains ride,
Haste here where choice of pleasures do reside;
Come to my tow'rs and leave th' unpleasant scene,
My cheerful bosom shall your warmth sustain.

Screen'd in my walls you may bleak winter shun,
And for a while forget the distant sun;
My blazing fires, bright lamps, and sparkling wine,
As summer's sun shall warm, like him shall shine.

My witty clubs of minds that move at large,
With ev'ry glass can some great thought discharge:
When from my senate, and the toils of law,
T' unbend the mind from bus'ness, you withdraw
With such gay friends to laugh some hours away,
My winter ev'n shall ding the summer's day.

My schools of law produce a manly train
Of fluent orators, who right maintain:
Practis'd t' express themselves a graceful way,
An eloquence shines forth in all they say.

Some Raphael, Rubens, or Vandyke admire,
Whose bosoms glow with such a godlike fire:

(1) [* See Remarks, page 66, *ante*.]

Of my own race I have, who shall ere long,
Challenge a place amongst th' immortal throng.
Others in smoothest numbers are profuse,
And can in Mantuan dactyls lead the muse:
And others can with music make you gay,
With sweetest sounds Corelli's art display,
While they around in softest measures sing,
Or beat melodious solos from the string.
What pleasure can exceed to know what's great,
The hinge of war, and winding draughts of state?
These and a thousand things th' aspiring youth
May learn with pleasure from the sage's mouth;
While they full-fraughted judgments do unload,
Relating to affairs home and abroad.
The gen'rous soul is fir'd with noble flame
To emulate victorious Eugene's fame,
Who with fresh glories decks th' Imperial throne,
Making the haughty Ott'man empire groan:
He'll learn when warlike Sweden and the Czar,
The Danes and Prussians, shall demit the war;
T' observe what mighty turns of fate may spring
From this new war rais'd by Iberia's king.
Long ere the morn from eastern seas arise
To sweep night-shades from off the vaulted skies,
Oft love or law in dreams your mind may toss,
And push the sluggish senses to their posts;
The hautboy's distant notes shall then oppose
Your phantom cares, and lull you to repose.
To visit and take tea, the well-dress'd fair
May pass the crowd unruffled in her chair;
No dust or mire her shining foot shall stain,
Or on the horizontal hoop give pain.
For beaux and belles no city can compare,
Nor show a galaxy so made, so fair.

The ears are charm'd, and ravish'd are the eyes,
When at the concert my fair stars arise.
What poets of fictitious beauties sing,
Shall in bright order fill the dazzling ring;
From Venus, Pallas, and the spouse of Jove,
They 'd gain the prize, judg'd by the god of love;
Their sun-burnt features would look dull and fade,
Compar'd with my sweet white and blushing red.
The character of beauties so divine
The muse for want of words cannot define.
The panting soul beholds, with awful love,
Impress'd on clay th' angelic forms above,
Whose softest smiles can pow'rfully impart
Raptures sublime in dumb-show to the heart.
The strength of all these charms if ye defy,
My court of justice shall make you comply.
Welcome, my session, thou my bosom warms,
Thrice three times welcome to thy mother's arms;
Thy father long (rude man!) has left my bed,
Thou 'rt now my guard, and support of my trade;
My heart yearns after thee with strong desire,
Thou dearest image of thy ancient sire.
Should proud Augusta take thee from me too,
So great a loss would make Edina bow;
I 'd sink beneath a weight I could not bear,
And in a heap of rubbish disappear.
Vain are such fears!—I'll rear my head in state,
My boding heart foretells a glorious fate:
New stately structures on new streets shall rise,
And new-built churches tow'ring to the skies.
From utmost Thulé to the Dover-rock,
Britain's best blood in crowds to me shall flock;
A num'rous fleet shall be my Fortha's pride,
While they in her calm roads at anchor ride;

These from each coast shall bring what's great and rare
To animate the brave, and please the fair.

1721.

ON THE PRESERVATION OF MR. BRUCE AND HIS SCHOOL-FELLOWS, IN ST. ANDREW'S BAY,

On the 19th of August 1710.

Six times the day with light and hope arose,
As oft the night her terrors did oppose,
While, toss'd on roaring waves, the tender crew
Had nought but death and horror in their view:
Pale famine, seas, bleak cold, at equal strife,
Conspiring all against their bloom of life;
Whilst, like the lamp's last flame, their trembling souls
Are on the wing to leave their mortal goals;
And death before them stands with frightful stare,
Their spirits spent and sunk down to despair.
Behold th' indulgent Providental eye
With watchful rays descending from on high:
Angels came posting down the divine beam,
To save the helpless in their last extreme:
Unseen the heav'nly guard about them flock,
Some rule the winds, some lead them up the rock,
While other two attend the dying pair,
To waft their young white souls thro' fields of air.

1721. [1719?]

ON CONTENT.(1)

Content is wealth, the riches of the mind;
And happy he who can that treasure find.
But the base miser starves amidst his store,
Broods on his gold, and griping still for more,
Sits sadly pining, and believes he's poor.

DRYDEN.

Virtue was taught in verse, and Athens' glory rose.

PRIOR.

WHEN genial beams wade thro' the dewy morn,
And from the clod invite the sprouting corn;
When chequer'd green, wing'd music, new-blown scents,
Conspir'd to soothe the mind, and please each sense;
Then down a shady haugh I took my way,
Delighted with each flow'r and budding spray;
Musing on all that hurry, pain, and strife,
Which flow from the fantastic ills of life.
Enlarg'd from such distresses of the mind,
Due gratitude to heav'n my thoughts refin'd,
And made me, in the laughing sage's (2) way,
As a mere farce the murm'ring world survey;
Finding imagin'd maladies abound
Tenfold for one which gives a real wound.

Godlike is he whom no false fears annoy,
Who lives content, and grasps the present joy;
Whose mind is not with wild convulsions rent,
Of pride, and avarice, and discontent;
Whose well-train'd passions, with a pious awe,
Are all subordinate to reason's law:
Then smooth Content arises like the day,
And makes each rugged phantom fly away;

(1) [* See Remarks, p. 67, *ante*.] (2) Democritus.

To lowest men she gives a lib'ral share
Of solid bliss; she mitigates our care,
Enlarging joys, administering health,—
The rich man's pleasure, and the poor man's wealth;
A train of comforts on her nod attend,
And to her sway profits and honours bend.
Hail, blest Content! who art by heav'n design'd
Parent of health and cheerfulness of mind;
Serene Content shall animate my song,
And make th' immortal numbers smooth and strong!
'Silenus,—thou whose hoary beard and head
Experience speak, and youth's attention plead,—
Retail thy gather'd knowledge, and disclose
What state of life enjoys the most repose.'
Thus I addrest:—And thus the ancient bard:—
'First, to no state of life fix thy regard;
All mortals may be happy if they please,
Not rack'd with pain, nor ling'ring in disease.
'Midas the wretch, wrapt in his patched rags,
With empty paunch sits brooding o'er his bags;
Meagre his look, his mind in constant fright,
If winds but move his windows in the night;
If dogs should bark, or but a mouse make din,
He sweats and starts, and thinks the thief 's got in;
His sleep forsakes him till the dawn appears,
Which ev'ry thing but such a caitiff cheers;
It gives him pain to buy a farthing light,
He jums at home in darkness all the night.
What makes him manage with such cautious pain?
'T would break a sum,—a farthing spent so vain!
If e'er he's pleas'd, 'tis when some needful man
Gives ten per cent. with an insuring pawn.
Though he 's provided in as much would serve
Whole Nestor's years, he ever fears to starve.

Tell him of alms: alas! he'd rather choose
Damnation, and the promis'd bliss refuse.'—
'And is there such a wretch beneath the sun?'—
'Yes,' he return'd, 'thousands instead of one
To whom content is utterly unknown.'—
'Are all the rich men such?'—He answer'd, 'No.
Marcus hath wealth, and can his wealth bestow
Upon himself, his friends, and on the poor;
Enjoys enough, and wishes for no more.

'Reverse of these is he who braves the sky,
Cursing his Maker when he throws the die:
Gods, devils, furies, hell, heav'n, blood and wounds,
Promiscuous fly in bursts of tainted sounds.
He to perdition doth his soul bequeath,
Yet inly trembles when he thinks of death.
Except at game, he ne'er employs his thought,
Till hiss'd and pointed at—not worth a groat.
The desp'rate remnant of a large estate
Goes at one throw, and points his gloomy fate;
He finds his folly now, but finds too late.
Ill brooks my fondling master to be poor,
Bred up to nought but bottle, game, and whore;
How pitiful he looks without his rent!
They who fly virtue, ever fly content.'

Now I beheld the sage look'd less severe,
Whilst pity join'd his old satyric leer.
'The weakly mind,' said he, 'is quickly torn;
Men are not gods, some frailties must be borne;
Heav'n's bounteous hand all in their turn abuse;
The happiest men at times their fate refuse,
Befool themselves, and trump up an excuse.

'Is Lucius but a subaltern of foot?
His equal Gallus is a coronet.

'Sterilla shuns a gossiping, and why?
The teeming mother fills her with envy.

The pregnant matron's grief as much prevails,
Some of the children always something ails;
One boy is sick,—t'other has broke his head,—
And nurse is blam'd when little miss is dead.(1)

'A duchess, on a velvet couch reclin'd,
Blabs her fair cheeks till she is almost blind;
Poor Phillis' death the briny pearls demands,
Who ceases now to snarl and lick her hands.

'The politicians who, in learn'd debates,
With penetration carve out kingdoms' fates,
Look sour, drink coffee, shrug, and read gazettes.
Deep sunk in craft of state their souls are lost,
And all their hopes depend upon the post;
Each mail that's due they curse the contrair wind.
'Tis strange if this way men contentment find:
Though old, their humours I am yet to learn,
Who vex themselves in what they've no concern.

'Ninny, the glaring fop, who always runs
In tradesmen's books, which makes the careful duns
Often ere ten to break his slumb'ring rest,—
Whilst with their craving clamours he's opprest,
He frames excuses till his cranny akes,
Then thinks he justly damns the cursed sneaks.
The disappointed dun, with as much ire,
Both threats and curses till his breast's on fire;
Then home he goes and pours it on his house,
His servants suffer oft, and oft his spouse.

'Some groan through life amidst a heap of cares,
To load with too much wealth their lazy heirs.
The lazy heir turns all to ridicule,
And all his life proclaims his father fool;
He toils in spending; leaves a threadbare son,
To scrape anew, as had his grandsire done.

(1) [* See Remarks, page 86, *ante*.]

'How is the fair Myrtilla's bosom fir'd,
If Leda's sable locks are more admired!
While Leda does her secret sighs discharge,
Because her mouth's a straw-breath, ah! too large.'
Thus sung the sire, and left me to invite
The scorching beams in some cool green retreat;
Where gentle slumber seiz'd my weary'd brain,
And mimic Fancy op'd the following scene:
Methought I stood upon a rising ground,
A splendid landscape open'd all around,
Rocks, rivers, meadows, gardens, parks, and woods,
And domes which hide their turrets in the clouds.
To me approach'd a nymph divinely fair,
Celestial virtue shone through all her air;
A nymph for grace, her wisdom more renown'd
Adorn'd each grace, and both true valour crown'd.
Around her heav'nly smiles a helmet blaz'd,
And graceful as she mov'd, a spear she gently rais'd.
My sight at first the lustre scarce could bear,
Her dazzling glories shone so strong and clear;
A majesty sublime with all that's sweet,
Did adoration claim, and love invite.
I felt her wisdom's charm my thoughts inspire,
Her dauntless courage set my soul on fire.
The maid, when thus I knew, I soon addrest,
My present wishful thoughts the theme suggest:—
'Of all th' ethereal pow'rs, thou, noblest maid,
To human weakness lend'st the readiest aid:
To where Content and her blest train reside,
Immortal Pallas, deign to be my guide.'
With my request well-pleas'd, our course we bent
To find the habitation of Content.
Through fierce Bellona's tents we first advanc'd,
Where cannons bounc'd, and nervous horses pranc'd.

Here *Vi-et-armis* sat, with dreadful awe
And daring front, to prop each nation's law;
Attending squadrons on her motions wait,
Array'd in deaths, and fearless of their fate.
Here chieftain-souls glow'd with as great a fire
As his who made the world but one empire;
E'en in low ranks brave spirits might be found,
Who wanted nought of monarchs but a crown.
But, ah! ambition stood a foe to peace,
Shaking the empty fob, and ragged fleece;
Which were more hideous to these sons of war
Than brimstone, smoke, and storms of bullets are.
'Here,' said my guide, 'Content is rarely found,
Where blood and noisy jars beset the ground.'
Trade's wealthy warehouse next fell in our way,
Where in great bales part of each nation lay
The Spanish citron, and Hesperia's oil;
Persia's soft product, and the Chinese toil;
Warm Borneo's spices, Arab's scented gum,
The Polish amber, and the Saxon mum;
The orient pearl, Holland's lace and toys,
And tinsel work which the fair nun employs:
From India iv'ry and the clouded cane,
And coch'neal from the straits of Magellan;
The Scandinavian rosin, hemp, and tar,
The Lapland furs, and Russian caviare;
The Gallic puncheon charg'd with ruby juice,
Which makes the hearts of gods and men rejoice;
Britannia here pours from her plenteous horn
Her shining mirrors, clock-work, cloths, and corn.
Here cent. per cents. sat pouring o'er their books;
While many show'd the bankrupts in their looks,
Who, by mismanagement their stock had spent,
Curs'd these hard times, and blam'd the government.

The missive letter, and peremptor bill,
Forbade them rest, and call'd forth all their skill.
Uncertain Credit bore the sceptre here,
And her prime ministers were hope and fear.
The surly chuffs demanded what we sought?—
'Content,' said I: 'may she with gold be bought?'
'Content!' said one; then star'd and bit his thumb,
And leering ask'd, if I was worth a plumb?(1)

Love's fragrant fields, where mildest western gales,
Loaden with sweets, perfume the hills and dales;
Where longing lovers haunt the streams and glades,
And cooling groves whose verdure never fades;
Thither with joy and hasty steps we strode,
There sure I thought our longed-for bliss abode.
Whom first we met on that enchanted plain
Was a tall yellow-hair'd young pensive swain;
Him I address'd:—'O youth! what heavenly pow'r
Commands and graces yon Elysian bow'r?
Sure 'tis Content, else much I am deceiv'd.'
The shepherd sigh'd, and told me that I rav'd:
'Rare she appears, unless on some fine day
She grace a nuptial, but soon hastes away.
If her you seek, soon hence you must remove,
Her presence is precarious in love.'

Through these and other shrines we wander'd long,
Which merit no description in my song;
Till at the last methought we cast our eye
Upon an antique temple, square and high,
Its area wide, its spire did pierce the sky;
On adamantine Doric pillars rear'd,
Strong gothic work the massy work appear'd;
Nothing seem'd little, all was great design'd,
Which pleas'd the eye at once, and fill'd the mind.

(1) One hundred thousand pounds.

Whilst wonder did my curious thoughts engage,
To us approach'd a studious rev'rend sage;
Both awe and kindness his grave aspect bore,
Which spoke him rich with wisdom's finest store.
He asked our errand there:—Straight I replied,
'Content,—in these high tow'rs does she reside?'—
'Not far from hence,' said he, 'her palace stands;
Ours she regards, as we do her demands;
Philosophy sustains her peaceful sway,
And in return she feasts us ev'ry day.'
Then straight an ancient telescope he brought,
By Socrates and Epictetus wrought;
Improved since,—made easier to the sight,—
Lengthen'd the tube,—the glasses ground more bright;
Through this he show'd a hill, whose lofty brow
Enjoy'd the sun, while vapours all below,
In pitchy clouds, encircled it around,
Where phantoms of most horrid forms abound,—
The ugly brood of lazy spleen and fear,
Frightful in shape, most monstrous appear.
Then thus my guide:—
'Your way lies through yon gloom; be not aghast;
Come briskly on, you'll jest them when they're past;
Mere empty spectres, harmless as the air,
Which merit not your notice, less your care.'
Encourag'd with her word, I thus addrest
My noble guide, and grateful joy exprest:—
'O sacred wisdom! thine's the source of light.
Without thy blaze, the world would grope in night;
Of woe and bliss thou only art the test;
Falsehood and truth before thee stand confest;
Thou mak'st a double life, one nature gave,
But without thine what is it mortals have?
A breathing motion grazing to the grave.'

Now, through the damps methought we boldly went,
Smiling at all the grins of discontent;
Though oft pull'd back, the rising ground we gain'd,
Whilst inward joy my wearied limbs sustain'd.
Arriv'd the height, whose top was large and plain,
And what appear'd soon recompens'd my pain,
Nature's whole beauty deck'd th' enamell'd scene.
Amidst the glade the sacred palace stood,
The architecture not so fine as good;
Nor scrimp, nor gousty,—regular and plain,—
Plain were the columns which the roof sustain;
An easy greatness in the whole was found,
Where all that nature wanted did abound.
But here no beds are screen'd with rich brocade;
Nor fuel-logs in silver grates are laid;
No broken China bowls disturb the joy
Of waiting handmaid, or the running-boy;
Nor in the cupboard heaps of plate are rang'd,
To be with each splenetic fashion chang'd.
A weather-beaten sentry watch'd the gate,
Of temper cross, and practis'd in debate.
Till once acquaint with him, no entry here,
Though brave as Cæsar, or as Helen fair:
To strangers fierce, but with familiars tame,
And Touchstone Disappointment was his name.
This fair inscription shone above the gate,
"Fear none but Him, whose will directs thy fate."
With smile austere he lifted up his head,
Pointed the characters, and bid us read.
We did, and stood resolv'd. The gates at last
Op'd of their own accord, and in we past.
Each day a herald, by the queen's command,
Was order'd on a mount to take his stand,
And thence to all the earth this offer make:
'Who are inclin'd her favours to partake,

Shall have them free, if they small rubs can bear
Of disappointment, spleen, and bug-bear fear.'
Rais'd on a throne within the outer gate,
The goddess sat, her vot'ries round her wait.
The beautiful divinity disclos'd
Sweetness sublime, which roughest cares compos'd;
Her looks sedate, yet joyful and serene;
Not rich her dress, but suitable and clean;
Unfurrow'd was her brow, her cheeks were smooth,
Though old as time enjoy'd immortal youth;
And all her accents so harmonious flow'd,
That ev'ry list'ning ear with pleasure glow'd.
An olive-garland on her head she wore,
And her right hand a cornucopia bore.
Cross Touchstone fill'd a bench without the door,
To try the sterling of each human ore:
Grim judge he was, and them away he sent,
Unfit t' approach the shrine of calm content.
To him a hoary dotard, lade' with bags:—
Unwieldy load to one who hardly drags
His being!—'More than seventy years,' said he,
'I've sought this court, till now unfound by me;
Now let me rest.'—'Yes, if ye want no more;
But ere the sun has made his annual tour,
Know, grov'ling wretch! thy wealth's without thy pow'r.'
The thoughts of death, and ceasing from his gain,
Brought on the old man's head so sharp a pain,
Which dimm'd his optic nerves, and with the light,
He lost the palace, and crawl'd back to night.
Poor griping thing! how useless is thy breath,
While nothing's so much long'd for as thy death!
How meanly hast thou spent thy lease of years,
A slave to poverty, to toils, and fears!

And all to vie with some bleak rugged hill,
Whose rich contents millions of chests can fill.
As round the greedy rock clings to the mine,
And hinders it in open day to shine,
Till diggers hew it from the spar's embrace,
Making it circle, stamp'd with Cæsar's face;
So dost thou hoard, and from thy prince purloin
His useful image, and thy country coin;
Till gaping heirs have freed th' imprison'd slave,
When to their comfort thou hast fill'd a grave.

The next, who with a jaunty air approach'd,
Was a gay youth, who thither had been coach'd.
Sleek were his Flanders mares, his liv'ries fine,
With glitt'ring gold his furniture did shine.
Sure such, methought, may enter when they please,
Who have all these appearances of ease.
Strutting he march'd, nor any leave he crav'd,
Attempt'd to pass, but found himself deceiv'd.
Old Touchstone gave him on the breast a box,
Which op'd the sluices of a latent pox;
Then bid his equipage in haste depart.
The youth look'd at them with a fainting heart;
He found he could not walk, and bid them stay;
Swore three cramp oaths, mounted, and wheel'd away.

The Pow'r herself express'd thus, with a smile:—
'These changing shadows are not worth our while;
With smallest trifles oft their peace is torn;
If here at night, they scarcely wait the morn.'

Another beau, as fine, but more vivace,
Whose airs sat round him with an easy grace
And well-bred motion, came up to the gate;
I lov'd him much, and trembled for his fate.
The sentry broke his clouded cane;—he smil'd,
Got fairly in, and all our fears beguil'd.

The cane was soon renewed which had been broke,
And thus the Virtue to the circle spoke:—
'Each thing magnificent or gay we grant
To them who 're capable to bear their want.'
Two handsome toasts came next; them well I knew;
Their lovely make the court's observance drew.
Three waiting-maids attended in the rear,
Each loaden with as much as she could bear.
One mov'd beneath a load of silks and lace;
Another bore the offsets of the face;
But the most bulky burden of the three,
Was hers who bore the utensils of bohea.
My mind indulgent in their favour pled,
Hoping no opposition would be made;
So mannerly, so smooth, so mild their eye,
Enough almost to give Content envy.
But soon I found my error. The bold judge,
Who acted as if prompted by some grudge,
Them thus saluted with a hollow tone:—
'You're none of my acquaintance, get you gone!
What loads of trump'ry these!—Ha, where's my cross!
I'll try if these be solid ware, or boss!'
The china felt the fury of his blow,
And lost a being, or for use, or show;
For use or show no more's each plate or cup,
But all in shards upon the threshold drop.
Now ev'ry charm which deck'd their face before,
Gives place to rage, and beauty is no more;
The briny stream their rosy cheeks besmear'd,
Whilst they in clouds of vapour disappear'd.
A rustic hind, attir'd in home-spun grey,—
With forked locks, and shoes bedaub'd with clay,—
Palms shod with horn,—his front fresh, brown, and broad,—
With legs and shoulders fitted for a load:

He 'midst ten bawling children laugh'd and sung,
While consort hobnails on the pavement rung.
Up to the porter unconcern'd he came,
Forcing along his offspring and their dame.
Cross Touchstone strove to stop him, but the clown
At handy-cuffs him match'd, and threw him down;
And spite of him, into the palace went,
Where he was kindly welcom'd by Content.
Two Busbian philosophs put in their claims,
Gamaliel and Critis were their names;
But soon's they had our British Homer (1) seen
With face unruffled, waiting on the queen,—
Envious hate their surly bosoms fir'd,
Their colour chang'd, they from the porch retir'd;
Backward they went, reflecting with much rage
On the bad taste and humour of the age,
Which paid so much respect to nat'ral parts,
While they were starving graduates of arts.
The goddess fell a-laughing at the fools,
And sent them packing to their grammar-schools;
Or in some garret elevate to dwell,
There, with Sisyphian toil, to teach young beaux to spell.
Now, all this while a gale of eastern wind
And cloudy skies opprest the human mind;
The wind set west; back'd with the radiant beams,
Which warm'd the air, and danc'd upon the streams,
Exhal'd the spleen, and sooth'd a world of souls,
Who crowded now the avenue in shoals.
Numbers in black, of widowers, relicts, heirs;
Of new-wed lovers many handsome pairs;
Men landed from abroad, from camps and seas;
Others got through some dangerous disease;

(1) [* Pope.]

A train of belles adorn'd with something new;
And e'en of ancient prudes there were a few,
Who were refresh'd with scandal and with tea,
Which for a time set them from vapours free;
Here from their cups, the lower species flockt;
And knaves with bribes and cheating methods stockt.
The Pow'r survey'd the troop, and gave command,
They should no longer in the entry stand,
But be convey'd into Chimera's tow'r,
There to attend her pleasure for an hour.
Soon as they enter'd, apprehension shook
The fabric; fear was fixt on ev'ry look;
Old age and poverty, disease, disgrace,
With horrid grin, star'd full in ev'ry face,
Which made them, trembling at their unknown fate,
Issue in haste out by the postern-gate.
None waited out their hour but only two,
Who had been wedded fifteen years ago.
The man had learn'd the world, and fix'd his mind;
His spouse was cheerful, beautiful, and kind;
She neither fear'd the shock, nor phantom's stare;
She thought her husband wise, and knew that he was there.
Now while the court was sitting, my fair guide
Into a fine Elysium me convey'd.
I saw, or thought I saw, the spacious fields
Adorn'd with all prolific nature yields,
Profusely rich with her most valu'd store.
But as m' enchanted fancy wander'd o'er
The happy plain, new beauties seem'd to rise,
The fields were fled, and all was painted skies.
Pleas'd for a while, I wish'd the former scene;
Straight all return'd, and eas'd me of my pain.
Again the flow'ry meadows disappear,
And hills and groves their stately summits rear;

These sink again, and rapid rivers flow;
Next from the rivers cities seem to grow.
Some time the fleeting scene I had forgot,
In busy thought entranc'd: with pain I sought
To know the hidden charm: straight all was fled,
And boundless heav'ns o'er boundless oceans spread.
Impatient, I obtest my noble guide,
'Reveal this wondrous secret?' She reply'd;
'We carry'd on what greatly we design'd,
When all these human follies you resign'd,
Ambition, lux'ry, and a cov'tous mind.
Yet think not true content can thus be bought;
There's wanting still a train of virtuous thought.
'When me your leader prudently you chuse,
And, list'ning to my counsel, did refuse
Fantastic joys, your soul was thus prepar'd
For true content: and thus I do reward
Your gen'rous toil. Observe this wondrous clime;
Of nature's blessings here are hid the prime;
But wise and virtuous thought, in constant course,
Must draw these beauties from their hidden source;
The smallest intermissions will transform
The pleasant scene, and spoil each perfect charm.
'Tis ugly Vice will rob you of content,
And to your view all hellish woes present;
Nor grudge the care in virtue you employ,
Your present toil will prove your future joy.'
Then smil'd she heav'nly sweet, and parting said,
'Hold fast your virtuous mind, of nothing be afraid.'
A while the charming voice so fill'd my ears,
I griev'd the divine form no more appears:
Then to confirm my yet unsteady mind,
Under a lonely shadow I reclin'd,
To try the virtues of the clime I sought;
Then straight call'd up a train of hideous thought;

Famine, and blood, and pestilence appear,
While shrieks and loud laments disturb mine ear;
New woes and horrors did my sight alarm,
Envy and hate composed the wretched charm.
Soon as I saw, I dropt the hateful view,
And thus I sought past pleasures to renew.
To heav'nly love my thoughts I next compose,
Then quick as thought the foll'wing sights disclose:
Streams, meadows, grottos, groves, birds carolling;
Calmness, and temp'rate warmth, and endless spring;
A perfect transcript of these upper bow'rs,
The habitation of th' immortal pow'rs.
Back to the palace ravished I went,
Resolved to reside with blest Content;
Where all my special friends methought I met,
In order 'mongst the best of mankind set.
My soul, with too much pleasure, overcharg'd,
The captiv'd senses to their post enlarg'd.
Lifting mine eyes, I view'd declining day,
Sprang from the green, and homeward bent my way;
Reflecting on that hurry, pain, and strife,
Which flow from false and real ills of life.

1720.

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH'S SALUTATION TO THE MARQUIS OF CARNARVON. (1)

Welcome, my Lord! Heav'n be your guide,
And further your intention,
To whate'er place you sail or ride,
To brighten your invention!

(1) The eldest son of his Grace the Duke of Chandois, who, in May 1720, was at Edinburgh in his tour through Scotland.

The book of mankind, lang and wide,
Is well worth your attention;
Wherefore please some time here abide,
And measure the dimension
Of minds right stout.

O that ilk worthy British peer
Wad follow your example,
My auld grey head I yet wad rear,
And spread my skirts mair ample!
Should London pouch up a' the gear? (1)
She might spare me a sample;
In troth his Highness should live here;
For without oil our lamp will
Gang blinkan out.

Lang syne, my Lord, I had a court,
And nobles fill'd my cawsy;
But, since I have been fortune's sport,
I look nae hawff sae gawsy.
Yet here brave gentlemen resort,
And mony a handsome lassy:
Now that you 're lodg'd within my port,
How well I wat they 'll a' say,
'Welcome, my Lord!'

For you my best cheer I 'll produce;
I 'll no mak muckle vaunting;
But routh for pleasure and for use,
Whate'er you may be wanting,
You 's hae at will to chap and chuse,
For few things am I scant in.

(1) Edinburgh too often complained that the north of Britain is so remote from the Court, and so rarely enjoys the influence of British stars of the first magnitude.

The wale of well-set ruby juice, (1)
When you like to be rantin,
I can afford.

Than I, nor Paris, nor Madrid,
Nor Rome, I trow 's mair able,
To busk you up a better bed,
Or trim a tighter table.
My sons are honourably bred,
To truth and friendship stable;
What my detracting faes (2) have said,
You 'll find a feigned fable,
At the first sight.

May classic lear, and letters belle,
And travelling conspire,
Ilk unjust notion to repel,
And godlike thoughts inspire;
That in ilk action, wise and snell,
You may shaw manly fire;
Sae the fair picture of himsel
Will give his Grace, your Sire,
Immense delight.

(1) The most choice of fine claret.
(2) Those who from prejudice have reproached us with being rude, inhospitable, and false.

1721.

ON THE PROSPECT OF PLENTY; (1)

A POEM ON THE NORTH-SEA FISHERY,

INSCRIBED TO THE ROYAL BURROWS OF SCOTLAND.

THALIA, anes again, in blythsome lays,
In lays immortal, chant the North Sea's praise!
Tent how the Caledonians, lang supine,
Begin, mair wise, to open baith their een;
And, as they ought, t' employ that store which Heav'n
In sic abundance to their hands has giv'n.
Sae, th' heedless heir, born to a lairdship wide,
That yields mair plenty than he kens to guide,
Not well-acquainted with his ain good luck,
Lets ilka sneaking fellow take a pluck;
Till at the lang run, wi' a heart right sair,
He sees the bites grow bein as he grows bare;
Then, wak'ning, looks about with glegger glour,
And learns to thrive wha ne'er thought on 't before.
Nae nation in the warld can parallel
The plenteous product of this happy isle.
But past'ral heights, and sweet prolific plains,
That can at will command the saftest strains,
Stand yont; for Amphitrite (2) claims our sang,
Wha round fair Thule (3) drives her finny thrang,

(1) [* See Remarks, p. 69, *ante*.—In 1720, a joint-stock company was formed for the purpose of reviving the herring-fishery in Scotland. It consisted of about 2,000 of the principal people in the country, and the capital was divided into shares of £100 each. But, maugre our poet's predictions, like the South-sea bubble which burst about the same time, the whole concern soon vanished into air.]

(2) The wife of Neptune.

(3) The northern islands of Scotland are said to be the Thule of the ancients.

O'er shaws of coral and the pearly sands,
To Scotia's smoothest lochs and crystal strands.
There keeps the tyrant-pike his awfu' court,
Here trouts and salmond in clear channels sport.
Wae to that hand that dares by day or night
Defile the stream where sporting fries delight. (1)
But herrings, lovely fish, like best to play
In rowan ocean, or the open bay;
In crowds amazing thro' the waves they shine,
Millions on millions form ilk equal line;
Nor dares th' imperial whale, unless by stealth,
Attack their firm united commonwealth.
But artfu' nets, and fishers' wilie skill,
Can bring the scaly nations to their will.
When these retire to caverns of the deep,
Or in their oozy beds thro' winter sleep,
Then shall the tempting bait, and tented string,
Beguile the cod, the sea-cat, tusk, and ling.
Thus may our fishery, thro' a' the year,
Be still employ'd t' increase the public gear.
Delytfou labour! where th' industrious gains
Profit surmounting ten times a' his pains.
Nae pleasure like success! then lads stand bye,
Ye 'll find it endless in the Northern sea.
O'er lang, with empty brag, we have been vain
Of toom dominion on the plenteous main,
While others ran away with all the gain.
Thus proud Iberia (2) vaunts of sov'reign sway
O'er countries rich, frae rise to set of day;
She grasps the shadows, but the substance tines,
While a' the rest of Europe milk her mines.

(1) There are acts of parliament which severely prohibit the steeping of lint in running waters, or any other way defiling those rivers where salmon abound.

(2) Spain.

But dawns the day sets Britain on her feet!
Lang look'd-for 's come at last, and welcome be 't!
For numerous fleets shall hem Aebudan (1) rocks,
Commanding seas with rowth to raise our stocks.
Nor can this be a toom chimæra found;
The fabric 's bigget on the surest ground.
Sma' is our need to toil on foreign shores,
When we have baith the Indies at our doors;
Yet, for diversion, laden vessels may
To far aff nations cut the liquid way;
And fraught frae ilka port what 's nice or braw,
While for their trifles we maintain them a'.
Goths, Vandals, Gauls, Hesperians, and the Moors,
Shall a' be treated frae our happy shores;
The rantin Germans, Russians, and the Poles,
Shall feast with pleasure on our gusty shoals;
For which deep in their treasures we shall dive.
Thus by fair trading North-sea stock shall thrive.
Sae far the bonny prospect gives delight,
The warm ideas gart the muse take flight,
When straight a grumbletonian appears,
Peching fou sair beneath a laid of fears:—
'Wow! that's braw news,' quoth he, 'to make fools fain;
But gin ye be nae warlock, how d' ye ken?
Does Tam the Rhymer (2) spae oughtlings of this?
Or do ye prophesy just as ye wish?
Will projects thrive in this abandon'd place?
Unsonsy we had ne'er say meikle grace.
I fear, I fear, your tow'ring aim fa' short,
Alake we winn o'er far frae king and court!
The southerns will with pith your project bauk,
They 'll never thole this great design to tak.'

(1) The Lewis and other western islands.

(2) Thomas Learmond, called the Rhymer, lived in the reign of Alexander III. king of Scots, and is held in great esteem by the vulgar for his dark predictions.

Thus do the dubious ever countermine,
With party wrangle, ilka fair design.
How can a soul that has the use of thought,
Be to sic little creeping fancies brought?
Will Britain's king or parliament gainstand
The universal profit of the land?
Now, when nae sep'rate int'rest eggs to strife,
The ancient nations, join'd like man and wife,
Maun study close for peace and thriving's sake,
Aff a' the wissen'd leaves of spite to shake.
Let 's weave and fish to ane anither's hands,
And never think wha serves or wha commands;
But baith alike consult the common weal,
Happy that moment friendship makes us leal
To truth and right; then springs a shining day,
Shall clouds of sma' mistakes drive fast away.
Mistakes and private int'rest hence be gane!
Mind what they did on dire Pharsalia's plain,
Where doughty Romans were by Romans slain.
A meaner phantom neist, with meikle dread,
Attacks with senseless fears the weaker head:—
'The Dutch,' say they, 'will strive your plot to stap,
They'll toom their banks before you reap their crap;
Lang have they ply'd that trade like busy bees,
And suck'd the profit of the Pictland seas;
Thence riches fish'd mair, by themselves confest,
Than e'er they made by Indies East and West.'
O mighty fine and greatly was it spoke!
Maun bauld Britannia bear Batavia's yoke?
May she not open her ain pantry-door,
For fear the paughty state should gi'e a roar?
Dare she nane of her herrings sell or prive,
Afore she say, 'Dear Matkie, wi' ye'r leave?'
Curse on the wight wha tholes a thought sae tame!
He merits not the manly Briton's name.

Grant they 're good allies, yet it 's hardly wise
To buy their friendship at sae high a price.
But frae that airth we needna fear great skaith;
These people, right auldfarran, will be laith
To thwart a nation wha with ease can draw
Up ilka sluice they have, and drown them a'.
Ah, slothfu' pride! a kingdom's greatest curse;
How dowf looks gentry with an empty purse!
How worthless is a poor and haughty drone,
Wha thowless stands a lazy looker-on:
While active sauls a stagnant life despise,
Still ravish'd with new pleasures as they rise!
O'er lang, in troth, have we by-standers been,
And loot fowk lick (1) the white out of our een;
Nor can we wyt them, since they had our vote;
But now they 'se get the whistle of their groat!
Here did the muse intend a while to rest;
Till hameo'er spitefu' din her lugs opprest.
Anither set of the envious kind,
With narrow notions horribly confin'd,
Wag their boss noddles, syne with silly spite
Land ilka worthy project in a bite.
They force with awkward girn their ridicule,
And ca' ilk ane concern'd a simple fool,
Excepting some wha a' the lave will nick,
And gi'e them nought but bare whop-shafts to lick.
Malicious envy! root of a' debates,
The plague of government and bane of states,
The nurse of positive destructive strife,
Fair friendship's fae, which sours the sweets of life,
Prompter of sedition and base fead,
Still overjoy'd to see a nation bleed!—

(1) This phrase is always applied when people, with pretence of friendship, do you an ill turn; as one, licking a mote out of your eye, makes it blood-shot.

Stap, stap, my lass, (1) forgetna where ye're gawn,
If ye rin on, Heav'n kens where ye may land!
Turn to your fisher's sang, and let fowk ken
The North-sea skippers (2) are leal hearted men,
Vers'd in the critic seasons of the year,
When to ilk bay the fishing-buss should steer,
There to hawl up with joy the plenteous fry
Which on the decks in shining heaps shall lie,
Till carefou hands, e'en while they 've vital heat, (3)
Shall be employ'd to save their juices sweet.
Strick tent they 'll tak to stow them wi' strange brine, (4)
In barrels tight that shall nae liquor tine.
Then in the foreign markets we shall stand
With upright front, and the first sale demand.
This, this our faithfou trustees have in view,
And honourably will the task pursue;
Nor are they bigging castles in a cloud,
Their ships already into action scud. (5)
Now, dear ill-natur'd billies, say nae mair,
But leave the matter to their prudent care;
They 're men of candour, and right well they wate
That truth and honesty hads lang the gate. (6)
Shoulder to shoulder let 's stand firm and stout,
And there 's nae fear but we 'll soon make it out;
We 've reason, law, and nature on our side,
And have nae bars but party, sloth, and pride.
When a' 's in order, as it soon will be,
And fleets of busses fill the northern sea,
What hopefou images with joy arise
In order rank'd before the muse's eyes!

(1) The muse. (2) The managers.
(3) It is a great advantage to cure them immediately after they are taken. (4) Foreign salt.
(5) Several large ships are already employed, and took in their salt and barrels a month ago.
(6) Holds long up its head; longest keeps the highway or gate.

A wood of masts, well-mann'd; their jovial din,
Like eydent bees gawn out and coming in;
Here half a nation, healthfou, wise, and stark,
With spirits only tint for want of wark,
Shall now find place their genius to exert,
While in the common good they act their part.
These fit for servitude shall bear a hand,
And these find government form'd for command.
Besides, this, as a nursery, shall breed
Stout skill'd marines, which Britain's navies need.
Pleas'd with their labour, when their task is done,
They 'll leave green Thetis to embrace the sun.
Then freshest fish shall on the brander bleez,
And lend the busy browster wife a heez;
While healthfou hearts shall own their honest flame,
With reaming quaff, and whomelt to her name,
Whase active motion to his heart did reach,
As she the cods was turning on the beech.(1)
Curs'd poortith! Love and Hymen's deadly fae,
That gars young fowk in prime cry aft, 'Oh hey!'
And single live, till age and runkles shaw
Their canker'd spirits good for nought at a',
Now flit your camp, far frae our confines scour,
Our lads and lasses soon shall slight your pow'r;
For rowth shall cherish love, and love shall bring
Mae men t' improve the soil and serve the king.
Thus universal plenty shall produce
Strength to the state, and arts for joy and use.
O plenty! thou delyt of great and sma',
Thou nervous sinnow of baith war and law!
The statesman's drift,—spur to the artist's skill,—
Nor do the very flamens (2) like thee ill!

(1) The beech is the sea-shore where they dried the cod and ling.
(2) Priests.

The shabby poets hate thee:—that 's a lie!
Or else they are nae of a mind wi' me.
Plenty shall cultivate ilk scawp and moor,
Now lea and bare, because the landlord 's poor.
On scroggy braes shall akes and ashes grow,
And bonny gardens clad the brecken how.
Do others backward dam the raging main (1)
Raising on barren sands a flow'ry plain?
By us then should the thought o' 't be endur'd,
To let braid tracts of land lie unmanur'd?
Uncultivate nae mair they shall appear,
But shine with a' the beauties of the year,
Which start with ease frae the obedient soil,
And ten times o'er reward a little toil.
Alang wild shores, where tumbling billows break,
Plenisht with nought but shells and tangle wreck,
Braw towns shall rise, with steeples mony a ane,
And houses bigget a' with estler stane;
Where schools polite shall lib'ral arts display,
And make auld barb'rous darkness fly away.
Now Nerus rising frae his wat'ry bed,
The pearly drops hap down his lyart head;
Oceanus with pleasure hears him sing,
Tritons and Nereids form a jovial ring,
And dancing on the deep, attention draw,
While a' the winds in love but sighing blaw.
The sea-born prophet sang, in sweetest strain:
'Britons, be blythe! Fair queen of isles, be fain!
A richer people never saw the sun!
Gang tightly throw what fairly you 've begun;
Spread a' your sails and streamers in the wind,
For ilka pow'r in sea and air 's your friend;

(1) The Dutch have gained a great deal from the sea.

Great Neptune's unexhausted bank has store
Of endless wealth, will gar yours a' run o'er.'
He sang sae loud, round rocks the echoes flew,—
'Tis true!' he said; and they return'd 'Tis true.'

1715.

ON THE ECLIPSE OF THE SUN, APRIL 1715.

Now do I press among the learned throng,
To tell a great eclipse in little song.
At me nor scheme nor demonstration ask,
That is our Gregory's (1) or fam'd Halley's (2) task;
'Tis they who are conversant with each star;
We know how planets planets' rays debar;
This to pretend, my muse is not so bold,
She only echoes what she has been told.
Our rolling globe (3) will scarce have made the sun
Seem half-way up Olympus to have run,
When night's pale queen, in her oft changed way,
Will intercept in direct line his ray,
And make black night usurp the throne of day.
The curious will attend that hour with care,
And wish no clouds may hover in the air,
To dark the medium, and obstruct from sight
The gradual motion and decay of light;
Whilst thoughtless fools will view the water-pail,
To see which of the planets will prevail;
For then they think the sun and moon make war.
Thus nurse's tales oft-times the judgment mar.

(1) Mr. Gregory, professor of mathematics in Edinburgh.
(2) Fellow of the Royal society, London.
(3) According to the Copernican system.

When thus strange darkness overshades the plains,
'Twill give an odd surprise t' unwarn'd swains.
Plain honest hinds, who do not know the cause,
Nor know of orbs, their motions or their laws,
Will from their half-plough'd furrows homeward bend,
In dire confusion, judging that the end
Of time approacheth: thus possest with fear,
They'll think the gen'ral conflagration near.
The traveller, benighted on the road,
Will turn devout and supplicate his God.
Cocks with their careful mates and younger fry,
As if 't were ev'ning, to their roosts will fly.
The horned cattle will forget to feed,
And come home lowing from the grassy mead.
Each bird of day will to his nest repair,
And leave to bats and owls the dusky air;
The lark and little robin's softer lay
Will not be heard till the return of day.
Now this will be great part of Europe's case,
While Phebe 's as a mask on Phœbus' face.
The unlearn'd clowns, who don't our era know,
From this dark Friday will their ages show;
As I have often heard old country men
Talk of 'dark Monday,' (*) and their ages then.

Not long shall last this strange uncommon gloom,
When light dispels the ploughman's fear of doom;
With merry heart he 'll lift his ravish'd sight
Up to the heav'ns, and welcome back the light.
How just's the motions of these whirling spheres,
Which ne'er can err while time is met by years!
How vast is little man's capacious soul,
That knows how orbs through wilds of ether roll!
How great's the pow'r of that Omnific Hand,

(1) [* The allusion is to the famous "black Maunday" long remembered in Scottish traditional history.]

Who gave them motion by his wise command,
That they should not, while time had being, stand!

1715.

THE GENTLEMAN'S QUALIFICATIONS DEBATED. (1)

From different ways of thinking comes debate;
This we despise, and that we over-rate;
Just as the fancy takes, we love or hate.
Hence Whig and Tory live in endless jar,
And most of families in civil war;
Hence, 'mongst the easiest men beneath the skies,
E'en in their easy dome, debates arise;
As late they did with strength of judgment scan
Those qualities that form a gentleman.
First Tippermalloch pled, with Spanish grace,
That gentry only sprung from ancient race,
Whose names in old records of time were fix'd,
In whose rich veins some royal blood was mix'd.
I, being a poet sprung from a Douglas' loin,
In this proud thought did with the doctor join;
With this addition, if they could speak sense,
Ambitious I, ah! had no more pretence.
Buchanan, with stiff argument and bold,
Pled, gentry took its birth from powerful gold.

(1) By some of the fellows of the Easy club, a juvenile society of which I am a fellow. From the general antipathy we all seemed to have at the ill-humour and contradictions which arise from trifles, especially those which constitute Whig and Tory, without having the grand reason for it; this engaged us to take a pleasure in the sound of an Easy club. The club, by one of our special laws, must not exceed twelve; and every gentleman, at his admission, was to take the name of some Scots author, or one eminent for something extraordinary, for obscuring his real name in the register of our lucubrations; such as are named in this debate, *Tippermalloch, Buchanan, Hector Boece,* &c.

Him Hector Boece join'd. They argu'd strong;
Said they,—'To wealth that title must belong;
If men are rich, they're gentle; and if not,
You'll own their birth and sense are soon forgot.
Pray say,' said they, 'how much respectful grace
Demands an old red coat and mangled face?
Or one, if he could like an angel preach,
If he to no rich benefice can reach?
E'en progeny of dukes are at a stand
How to make out bare gentry without land.'
But still the doctor would not quit the field,
But that rich upstarts should to birth-right yield;
He grew more stiff, nor would the plea let go;
Said he was right, and swore it should be so.

But happy we, who have such wholesome laws,
Which, without pleading, can decide a cause.
To this good law recourse we had at last,
That throws off wrath, and makes our friendship fast;
In which the legislators laid the plot
To end all controversy by a vote.

Yet, that we more good humour might display,
We frankly turn'd the vote another way;
As, in each thing, we common topics shun,
So the great prize nor birth nor riches won.
The vote was carried thus: That easy he
Who should three years a social fellow be,
And to our Easy club give no offence,
After triennial trial, should commence
A gentleman; which gives as just a claim
To that great title, as the blast of Fame
Can give to those who tread in human gore,
Or those who heap up hoards of coined ore;
Since, in our social friendship, nought's design'd
But what may raise and brighten up the mind;

We aiming close to walk by virtue's rules,
To find true Humour's self, and leave her shade to fools.

1721.

ON FRIENDSHIP.

The earth-born clod, who hugs his idle pelf,
His only friends are Mammon and himself.
The drunken sots, who want the art to think,
Still cease from friendship when they cease from drink.
The empty fop, who scarce for man will pass,
Ne'er sees a friend but when he views his glass.

Friendship first springs from sympathy of mind,
Which to complete the virtues all combine;
And only found 'mongst men who can espy
The merits of his friend without envy.
Thus all pretending friendship's but a dream,
Whose base is not reciprocal esteem.

1721.

THE AUTHOR'S ADDRESS

TO THE TOWN-COUNCIL OF EDINBURGH.

Your poet humbly means and shaws,
That contrair to just rights and laws,
I've suffer'd muckle wrang,

By Lucky Reid (1) and ballad-singers,
Wha thumb'd, with their coarse dirty fingers,
Sweet Adie's funeral sang;
They spoil'd my sense, and staw my cash,
My muse's pride murgully'd;
And printing it like their vile trash,
The honest lieges whilly'd.
Thus undone, to London (2)
It gade to my disgrace,
Sae pimpin and limpin,
In rags wi' bluther'd face.

Yet gleg-eyed friends, through the disguise,
Receiv'd it as a dainty prize,
For a' it was sae hav'ren;
Gart Lintot take it to his press,
And clead it in a braw new dress,
Syne took it to the tavern.
But though it was made clean and braw,
Sae sair it had been knoited,
It blather'd buff (3) before them a',
And aftentimes turn'd doited.
It griev'd me, and reav'd me
Of kindly sleep and rest,
By carlings and gorling (4)
To be sae sair opprest.

(1) A printer's relict, who, with the hawkers, reprinted my pastoral on Mr. Addison, without my knowledge, on ugly paper, full of errors.

(2) One of their incorrect copies was reprinted at London, by Bernard Lintot, in folio, before he printed it a second time from a correct copy of my own, with the Honourable Mr. Burchet's English version of it.

(3) Spoke nonsense, from words being wanting, and many wrong spelled and changed, such as *gras* for *gars*, *praise* for *phrase*, &c.

(4) [* *Gorling*, an unfledged bird. The word seems to have little to recommend it here save in the alliteration.]

Wherefore to you, ne'er kend to guide ill,
But wisely had the good town's bridle,
My case I plainly tell;
And, as your ain,(1) plead I may have
Your word of weight, when now I crave
To guide my gear mysel.(2)
Then clean and fair the type shall be,
The paper like the snaw,
Nor shall our town think shame wi' me,
When we gang far awa'.
What's wanted, if granted,
Beneath your honour'd wing,
Baith hantily and cantily
Your supplicant shall sing.(3)

1721.

THE PETITION TO THE WHINBUSH CLUB.(4)

Of Crawfurd-moor, born in Leadhill,(5)
Where min'ral springs Glengoner(6) fill,
Which joins sweet-flowing Clyde,

(1) A free citizen.

(2) To interpose their just authority in my favour, and grant me an act to ward of those little pirates. Of which act I gratefully acknowledge the receipt.

(3) There being abundance of their petitioners who daily oblige themselves to pray.

(4) This club consists of Clydesdaleshire gentlemen, who frequently meet at a diverting hour, and keep up a good understanding amongst themselves over a friendly bottle. And, from a charitable principle, easily collect into their treasurer's box a small fund which has many a time relieved the distresses of indigent persons of that shire.

(5) In the parish of Crawfurd-moor, famous for the lead and gold mines belonging to the Earl of Hopetoun.

(6) The name of a small river which takes its rise from the Leadhills, and enters Clyde between the castle of Crawfurd and the mouth of Dencetne, another of the branches of Clyde.

Between auld Crawfurd-Lindsay's towers,
And where Deneetne rapid pours
His stream through Glotta's tide;
Native of Clydesdale's upper ward,
Bred fifteen summers there;
Though, to my loss, I am nae laird,
By birth, my title 's fair,
To bend wi' ye, and spend wi' ye
An ev'ning and gaffaw;
If merit and spirit
Be found without a flaw.

Since dously ye do nought at random,
Then take my bill to *avisandum;* (1)
And, if there's nae objection,
I'll deem't my honour, and be glad,
To come beneath your Whin-bush shade,
And claim from it protection,
If frae the caverns of a head
That's boss, a storm should blaw,
Etling wi' spite to rive my reed,
And give my muse a fa',
When poring and soaring
O'er Heliconian heights,
She traces these places
Where Cynthius delights.

(1). [* A Scottish law-phrase. To make *avisandum* with a process, is to take it from the court to the private consideration of the judge.]

SPOKEN TO ÆOLUS,

IN THE HOUSE OF MARLEFIELD,

ON THE NIGHT OF A VIOLENT WIND.

Why on this bow'r, bluff-cheeked god,—
Sacred to Phœbus, and th' abode
Of Bennet,(1) his much-dauted son,—
Say, wherefore makes thou all this din,
In dead of night?—Hech! like a kow,(2)
To fuff at winnocks and cry 'Wow!'—
I have it now:—Juno has seen
The fair Bennetas tread the green,
And them for bairns of Venus' guest,
Sae sends thee to disturb their rest.
Pray wauk your body, if you please,
Gae gowl and tooly on the seas!
Thou wants the pith to do them harm;
Within we're safe, and snug, and warm,
Kindly refresh'd with healthfu' sleep,
While to my cod my pow I keep,
Canty and cosiely I lie,
And baith thy bursten cheeks defy.

1721.

CLYDE'S WELCOME TO HIS PRINCE.

"What cheerful sounds from ev'ry side I hear!
How beauteous on their banks my nymphs appear!

(1) Sir William Bennet, who lived at Marlefield.
(2) [* *Kow*, a goblin,—a kind of Brownie.]

Got through these massy mountains at my source,
O'er rocks stupendous (1) of my upper course,
To these fair plains where I more smoothly move,
Through verdant vales to meet Avona's (2) love.
Yonder she comes beneath Dodonia's shade,
How blyth she looks, how sweet and gaylie clade!
Her flow'ry bounds bear all the pride of May,
While round her soft meanders shepherds play.
Hail, lovely Naid! to my bosom large,
Amidst my stores, commit thy crystal charge,
And speak these joys all thy deportment shews,
That to old Ocean I may have good news."
With solemn voice thus spoke majestic Clyde;
In softer notes lov'd Avon thus reply'd:
"Great Glotta! long have I had cause to mourn,
While my forsaken stream gush'd from my urn;
Since my late Lord, his nation's just delight,
Greatly lamented sunk in endless night.
His hopeful stem, our chief desire and boast,
Expos'd to danger on some foreign coast,
Lonely for years I 've murmur'd on my way,
When dark I wept, and sigh'd in shining day."
The sire return'd:—"Just reasons for thy pains,
So long to wind thro' solitary plains;
Thy loss was mine, I sympathiz'd with thee,
Since one our griefs, then share thy joys with me."
"Then hear me, liquid chieftain of the dale,
Hush all your cat'racts till I tell my tale,
Then rise and roar, and kiss your bord'ring flowers,
And sound our joys around yon lordly towers;
Yon lordly towers, which happy now contain
Our brave and youthful Prince, return'd again."

(1) The river falls over several high precipices, such as Corra's lin, Stane-byre lin, &c.
(2) The small river Avon, which joins the Clyde near Hamilton.

"Welcome!" in loudest raptures cry'd the flood;
His welcome echo'd from each hill and wood.
"Enough, Avona; long may they contain
The noble youth, safely return'd again.
From the green mountain (1) where I lift my head,
With my twin-brothers, Annan and the Tweed,
To those high arches (2) where, as Culdees sing,
The pious Mungo fish'd the trout and ring,
My fairest nymphs shall on my margin play,
And make e'en all the year one holiday.
The sylvan powers and watches of each height,
Where fleecy flocks and climbing goats delight,
Shall from their groves and rocky mountains roam,
To join with us and sing his welcome home.
With lofty notes we 'll sound his high descent,
His dawning merits, and heroic bent;
Those early rays which steadfastly shall shine,
And add new glories to his ancient line,—
A line aye loyal, and fir'd with gen'rous zeal,
The bravest patrons of the commonweal:
From him, who plung'd the sword (so muses sing) (3)
Deep in his breast, who durst defame our king.

(1) From the same hill the rivers Clyde, Tweed, and Annan have their rise; yet run to three different seas, viz. the Northern ocean, the German ocean, and the Irish sea.

(2) The bridge of Glasgow; where, as it is reported, St. Mungo, the patron of that city, drew up a fish that brought him a ring which had been dropt. Which miracle Glasgow retains the memory of in the city-arms.

(3) Vide the ingenious Mr. Patrick Gordon's account of this illustrious family, in his poem on the valiant achievements of our great king Robert surnamed the Bruce, chap. iv. Beginning at this stanza, the prophet speaks to our monarch:

"Now in thy time (quoth he) there shall arrive
A worthy knight, that from his native land
Shall fly, because he bravely shall deprive,
In glorious fight, a knight that shall withstand
Thy praises due, while he doth thee deserive;
Yea, e'en this knight shall with victorious hand
Come here; whose name his seed shall eternize,
And still thy virtuous line shall sympathize."

We 'll sing the fire which in his bosom glows,
To warm his friends, and scorch his daring foes;
Endow'd with all those sweet, yet manly charms,
As fit him for the fields of love or arms;
Fixt in an high and independent state,
Above to act what 's little, to be great.
Guard him, first Pow'r, whose hand directs the sun,
And teach him through dark caverns to run;
Long may he on his own fair plains reside,
And slight my rival Thames, and love his Clyde.

1721.

ON THE MARQUIS OF BOWMONT'S CUTTING OFF HIS HAIR.

Shall Berenice's tresses mount the skies,
And by the muse to shining fame arise?
Belinda's lock invite the smoothest lays
Of him whose merit claims the British bays?
And not, dear Bowmont, beautiful and young,
The graceful ringlets of thy head be sung?
How many tender hearts thine eyes hath pain'd!
How many sighing nymphs thy locks have chain'd!
The god of love beheld him with envy,
And on Cytherea's lap began to cry,
All drench'd in tears, "O mother! help your son,
Else by a mortal rival I 'm undone.
With happy charms h' encroaches on my sway;
His beauty disconcerts the plots I lay;
When I 've made Cloe her humble slave admire,
Straight he appears and kindles new desire;
She sighs for him, and all my art beguiles,
Whilst he, like me, commands and careless smiles.

Ah me! those sable circles of his hair,
Which wave around his beauties red and fair,
I cannot bear! Adonis would seem dim,
With all his flaxen locks, if plac'd by him."
Venus reply'd: "No more, my dearest boy,
Shall those enchanting curls thy peace destroy;
For ever sep'rate, they shall cease to grow
Or round his cheek, or on his shoulders flow;
I 'll use my slight, and make them quickly feel
Their honour's lost by the invading steel.
I 'll turn myself in shape of mode and health,
And gain upon his youthful mind by stealth;
Three times the sun shall not have rous'd the morn
E'er he consent those from him shall be shorn."
The promise she perform'd. But labour vain,
And still shall prove, while his bright eyes remain;
And of revenge blind Cupid must despair,
As long 's the lovely sex are grac'd with hair;
They 'll yield the conquering glories of their heads,
To form around his beauty easy shades;
And in return, Thalia spaes, and sings,
His lop'd-off locks shall sparkle in their rings.

1721.

TO SOME YOUNG LADIES,

Who were displeased with a Gentleman for telling them, that condemnation to a state of virginity was the greatest of punishments.

Whether condemn'd to virgin-state,
By the superior powers,
Would to your sex prove cruel fate,
I 'm sure it would to ours.

From you the numerous nation spring,
Your breasts our being save;
Your beauties make the youthful sing,
And soothe the old and grave.

Alas! how soon would every wight
Despise both wit and arms;
To primitive old chaos night,
We 'd sink without your charms.

No more our breath would be our care,
Were love from us exil'd;
Sent back to heaven with all the fair,
This world would turn a wild.

Regardless of these sacred ties,—
Wife, husband, father, son,—
All government we would despise,
And like wild tigers run.

Then, ladies, pardon the mistake,
And with th' accus'd agree,
I beg it for each lover's sake,
Low-bended on my knee;

And frankly wish what has been said,
By the audacious youth,
Might be your thought. But I 'm afraid
It will not prove a truth;

For often, ah! you make us groan,
By your too cold disdain;
Then, quarrel with us when we moan,
And rave amidst our pain.

1721.

THE POET'S WISH.

Frae great Apollo, poet say,
What is thy wish,—what wadst thou hae,—
When thou bows at his shrine?
Not carse o' Gowrie's fertile field;
Nor a' the flocks the Grampians yield,
That are baith sleek and fine;
Not costly things brought frae afar,
As ivory, pearl, and gems;
Nor those fair straths that water'd are
With Tay and Tweed's smooth streams,
Which gentily, and daintily,
Pare down the flow'ry braes,
As greatly, and quietly,
They wimple to the seas.

Whaever by his canny fate
Is master of a good estate,
That can ilk thing afford,
Let him enjoy 't withouten care,
And with the wale of curious fare
Cover his ample board.
Much dawted by the gods is he,
Wha to the Indian plain
Successfu' ploughs the wally sea,
And safe returns again,
With riches, that hitches
Him high aboon the rest
Of sma' fowk, and a' fowk,
That are wi' poortith prest.

For me, I can be well content
To eat my bannock on the bent,
And kitchen 't wi' fresh air;
Of lang-kail I can make a feast,
And cantily had up my crest,
And laugh at dishes rare.
Nought frae Apollo I demand,
But through a lengthen'd life,
My outer fabric firm may stand,
And soul clear without strife.
May he then, but gie then,
Those blessings for my skair;
I 'll fairly, and squairly,
Quite a', and seek nae mair.

1724.

HEALTH:

A POEM INSCRIBED TO THE EARL OF STAIR.

Be 't mine the honour once again to hear
And see the best of men for me appear.
I 'll proudly chant: be dumb, ye vulgar throng!
Stair bids me sing; to him these lays belong;
If he approves, who can condemn my song?
Of health I sing. O health! my portion be,
And to old age I 'll sing, if bless'd by thee.
Blessing divine! Heaven's fairest gift to man!
Soul of his joys! and length'ner of his span!
His span of life preserv'd with panting breath,
Without thy presence proves a ling'ring death.
The victor kings may cause wide nations bow,
And half a globe with conqu'ring force subdue;

Bind princes to their axle-trees, and make
The wond'ring mob of staring mortals quake;
Erect triumphal arches, and obtain
The loud huzza from thousands in their train;
But if her sweetness balmy health denies,
Without delight pillars or Æneids rise.
Cosmelius may on silky quilts repose,
And have a num'rous change of finest clothes;
Box'd in his chair, he may be borne to dine
On ortolans, and sip fine Tokay wine;
His liver if an inflammation seize,
Or wasting lungs shall make him cough and wheeze,
No more he smiles; nor can his richest toys,
Or looking-glass, restore his wonted joys;
The rich brocade becomes a toilsome weight,
The brilliant gem offends his weakly sight;
Perfumes grow nauseous then, nor can he bear
Loud tuneful notes that us'd to charm his ear;
To please his taste the cook attempts in vain,
When now each former pleasure gives him pain.
Nor flowing bowls, loud laugh, or midnight freak,
Nor smutty tale, delight the roving rake;
When health forsakes him, all diversions tire;
There's nothing pleases, nothing can inspire
A blythsome smile; he shuns the shine of light,
And broken slumbers make a weary night.
If silent sleep attempt to bring him ease,
His watching fancy feels the whole disease;
He dreams a mountain lies upon his breast,
Or that he flies the fury of some beast;
Sees at vast distance, gushing from the rocks,
The cooling stream, while burning thirst provokes
Him, fainting, to climb up the craggy edge,
And drag his limbs thro' many a thorny hedge;

Hangs o'er a precipice, or sinks in waves;
And all the while he sweats, turns, starts, and raves.
How mad's that man, push'd by his passions wild,
Who 's of his greatest happiness beguil'd;
Who seems, whate'er he says, by actions low,
To court disease, our pleasure's greatest foe!
From Paris, deeply skill'd in nice ragoos,
In oleos, salmagundies, and hogoes,
Montanus sends for cooks, that his large board
May all invented luxury afford:
Health 's never minded, while the appetite
Devours the spicy death with much delight.
Meantime, king Arthur's sav'ry knighted loin
Appears a clown, and 's not allow'd to join
The marinated smelt, and sturgeon jowls,
Soup-vermicell, sous'd turbot, cray, and soals,
Fowls *à-la-daub*, and omelet of eggs,
The smother'd coney, and bak'd paddocks legs,
Pullets a bisk, and orangedo pye,
The larded peacock, and the *tarts de moy*,
The collar'd veal, and *pike in cassorole*,
Pigs *à-la-braise*, the tansy and brusole;
With many a hundred costly-mingled dish,
Wherein the moiety of flesh or fish
Is wholly lost, and vitiate as the taste
Of them who eat the dangerous repast,
Until the feeble stomach's over-cramm'd,
The fibres weaken'd, and the blood enflam'd.
What aching heads, what spleen, and drowsy eyes,
From undigested crudities arise!
But when Montano's paunch is over-cloy'd,
The bagnio or emetic wine 's employ'd;
These he imagines methods the most sure,
After a surfeit, to complete a cure;

But never dreams how much the balm of life
Is wasted by this forc'd unnat'ral strife.
Thus pewter vessels must by scouring wear,
While plate, more free from dross, continues clear.
Long unconsum'd the oak can bear the beams,
Or lie for ages firm beneath the streams;
But when alternately the rain and rays
Now dash, then dry the plank, it soon decays.
Luxurious man! altho' thou 'rt blest with wealth,
Why should thou use it to destroy thy health?
Copy Mellantius, if you 'd learn the art
To feast your friends, and keep their souls alert.
One good substantial British dish, or two,
Which sweetly in their natural juices flow,
Only appear; and here no danger 's found
To tempt the appetite beyond its bound;
And you may eat, or not, as you incline;
And, as you please, drink water, beer, or wine.
Here hunger 's safe, and gratefully appeas'd,
The spleen 's forbid, and all the spirits rais'd,
And guests arise regal'd, refresh'd, and pleas'd.
Grumaldo views, from rais'd parterres around,
A thousand acres of fat furrow'd ground,
And all his own; but these no pleasure yield,
While spleen hangs as a fog o'er ev'ry field;
The lovely landscape clad with gilded corn,
The banks and meads which flow'rs and groves adorn,
No relish have; his envious sullen mind,
Still on the fret, complains his fate's unkind;
Something he wants which always flies his reach,
Which makes him groan beneath his spreading beech.
When all of nature, silent, seem to shun
Their cares, and nod till the returning sun,
His envious thoughts forbid refreshing sleep,
And on the rack his hopeless wishes keep;

Fatigued and drumbly from the down he flies,
With skinny cheek, pale lips, and blood-run eyes.
Thus toil'd with lab'ring thoughts, he looks aghast,
And tasteless loathes the nourishing repast;
Meagre disease an easy passage finds,
Where joy's debarr'd in such corroded minds.
Such take no care the springs of life to save,
Neglect their health, and quickly fill a grave.
Unlike gay Myrtil, who, with cheerful air,
Less envious, tho' less rich, no slave to care,
Thinks what he has enough, and scorns to fret,
While he sees thousands less oblig'd to fate,
And oft'ner from his station casts his eye
On those below him, than on those more high:
Thus envy finds no access to his breast,
To sour his gen'rous joy, or break his rest.
He studies to do actions just and kind,
Which with the best reflections cheer the mind;
Which is the first preservative of health,
To be preferr'd to grandeur, pride, and wealth.
Let all who would pretend to common sense,
'Gainst pride and envy still be on defence;
Who love their health, nor would their joys control,
Let them ne'er nurse such furies in their soul,—
Nor wait on strolling Phimos to the stews,—
Phimos, who by his livid colour shews
Him lade with vile diseases, which are fixt
Upon his bones, and with his vitals mixt.
Does that man wear the image of his God,
Who drives to death on such an ugly road?
Behold him clad like any bright bridegroom,
In richest labours of the British loom;
Embroider'd o'er with gold, whilst lace, or lawn,
Waves down his breast, and ruffles o'er his han',

Set off with art, while vilely he employs
In sinks of death, for low dear-purchas'd joys.
He grasps the blasted shadows of the fair,
Whose sickly look, vile breath, and falling hair,
The flagg'd embrace, and mercenary squeeze,
The tangs of guilt, and terrors of disease,
Might warn him to beware, if wild desire
Had not set all his thoughtless soul on fire.
O poor mistaken youth! to drain thy purse,
To gain the most malignant human curse!
Think on thy flannel, and mercurial dose,
And future pains, to save thy nerve and nose!
Think, heedless wight! how thy infected veins
May plague thee many a day with loathsome pains,
When the French foe his woeful way has made,
And all within his dire detachments laid;
There long may lurk, and, with destruction keen,
Do horrid havock ere the symptom 's seen.
But learn to dread the poisonous disease,
When heaviness and spleen thy spirits seize;
When feeble limbs to serve thee will decline,
And languid eyes no more with sparkles shine;
The roses from thy cheek will blasted fade,
And leave a dull complexion like the lead;
Then, then expect the terrible attack
Upon thy head, thy conduit, nose, and back;
Pains thro' thy shoulders, arms, and throat, and shins,
Will threaten death, and damp thee with thy sins.
How frightful is the loss, and the disgrace,
When it destroys the beauties of the face!
When the arch nose in rotten ruin lies,
And all the venom flames around the eyes;
When th' uvula has got its mortal wound,
And tongue and lips form words without a sound;

When hair drops off, and bones corrupt and bare,
Through ulcerated tags of muscles stare!
But vain we sing instruction to his ear,
Who 's no more slave to reason than to fear.
Hurried by passion, and o'ercome with wine,
He rushes headlong on his vile design;
The nauseous bolus, and the bitter pill,
A month of spitting, and the surgeon's bill,
Are now forgot, whilst he—But here 'tis best
To let the curtain drop, and hide the rest
Of the coarse scene, too shocking for the sight
Of modest eyes and ears, that take delight
To hear with pleasure Urban's praises sung,—
Urban the kind, the prudent, gay, and young,
Who moves a man, and wears a rosy smile,
That can the fairest of a heart beguile;
A virtuous love delights him with its grace,
Which soon he 'll find in Myra's lov'd embrace,
Enjoying health, with all its lovely train
Of joys, free from remorse, or shame, or pain.
But Talpo sighs with matrimonial cares,
His cheeks wear wrinkles, silver grow his hairs,
Before old age his health decays apace,
And very rarely smiles clear up his face.
Talpo 's a fool,—there 's hardly help for that,—
He scarcely knows himself what he 'd be at;
He 's avaricious to the last degree,
And thinks his wife and children make too free
With his dear idol; this creates his pain,
And breeds convulsions in his narrow brain.
He always startled at approaching fate,
And, often jealous of his virtuous mate,
Is ever anxious, shuns his friends to save;
Thus soon he 'll fret himself into a grave;

There let him rot, worthless the muse's lays,
Who never read one poem in his days!
I sing to Marlus,—Marlus who regards
The well-meant verse, and gen'rously rewards
The poet's care. Observe now, if you can,
Aught in his carriage does not speak the man.
To him his many a winter wedded wife
Appears the greatest solace of his life;
He views his offspring with indulgent love,
Who his superior conduct all approve;
Smooth glide his hours; at fifty he 's less old
Than some who have not half the number told;
The cheering glass he with right friends can share,
But shuns the deep debauch with cautious care;
His sleeps are sound, he sees the morning rise,
And lifts his face with pleasure to the skies,
And quaffs the health that 's borne on Zephyr's wings,
Or gushes from the rock in limpid springs;
From fragrant plains he gains the cheering smell,
While ruddy beams all distant dumps repel.
The whole of nature, to a mind thus turn'd,
Enjoying health, with sweetness seems adorn'd.
To him the whistling ploughman's artless tune,
The bleating flocks, the oxen's hollow crune,
The warbling notes of the small chirping throng,
Give more delight than the Italian song;
To him the cheapest dish of rural fare,
And water cool, in place of wine more rare,
Shall prove a feast; on straw he 'll find more ease,
Than on the down even with the least disease.
Whoever 's tempted to trangress the line,
By moderation fix'd to enliv'ning wine,
View Macro, wasted long before his time,
Whose head, bow'd down, proclaims his liquid crime.

The purple dye, with ruby pimples mixt,
As witnesses upon his face are fixt;
A constant fever wastes his strength away,
And limbs enervate gradually decay;
The gout and palsy follow in the rear,
And make his being burdensome to bear;
His squeamish stomach loaths the savoury sey, (1)
And nought but liquids now can find their way,
To animate his strength, which daily flies,
Till the young drunkard 's past all hope, and dies.
To practise what we preach, O goddèss-born!
Assist thy slave, lest Bacchanalians scorn
Thy inspiration, if the tempting grape
Shall form the hollow eye and idiot gape.
But let no wretched misers, who repine,
And wish there were not such a juice as wine,
Imagine here that we are so profane
To think that Heav'n gave plenteous vines in vain:
No! since there's plenty, cups may sparkling flow,
And we may drink till our rais'd spirits glow;
They will befriend our health, while cheerful rounds
Incline to mirth, and keep their proper bounds.
Fools should not drink, I own, who still wish more,
And know not when 'tis proper to give o'er.
Dear Britons, let no morning-drinks deceive
Your appetites, which else at noon would crave
Such proper aliments as can support,
At even your hearty bottle, health and sport.
Next view we sloth—too oft the child of wealth,
A seeming friend, but real foe to health.
Lethargus lolls his lazy hours away,
His eyes are drowsy, and his lips are blae;
His soft enfeebled hands supinely hing,
And shaking knees, unus'd, together cling;

(1) The sirloin of beef.

Close by the fire his easy chair too stands,
In which all day he snotters, nods, and yawns.
Sometimes he 'll drone at piquet, hoping gain,
But you must deal his cards, that 's too much pain.
He speaks but seldom, puffs at ev'ry pause,
Words being a labour to his tongue and jaws;
Nor must his friends discourse above their breath,
For the least noise stounds thro' his ears like death.
He causes stop each cranny in his room,
And heaps on clothes, to save him from the rheum;
Free air he dreads as his most dangerous foe,
And trembles at the sight of ice or snow;
The warming-pan each night glows o'er his sheets,
Then he beneath a load of blankets sweats;
The which, instead of shutting, opes the door,
And lets in cold at each dilated pore.
Thus does the sluggard health and vigour waste,
With heavy indolence, till at the last,
Sciatic, jaundice, dropsy, or the stone,
Alternate makes the lazy lubbard groan.

But active Hilaris much rather loves,
With eager stride, to trace the wilds and groves;
To start the covey, or the bounding roe,
Or work destructive Reynard's overthrow.
The race delights him, horses are his care,
And a stout ambling pad his easiest chair.
Sometimes, to firm his nerves, he 'll plunge the deep,
And with expanded arms the billows sweep;
Then on the links, or in the estler walls,
He drives the gowff, or strikes the tennis-balls.
From ice with pleasure he can brush the snow,
And run rejoicing with his curling throw;
Or send the whizzing arrow from the string,—
A manly game, which by itself I sing. (1)

(1) A poem on seeing the archers playing at the Rovers.

Thus cheerfully he 'll walk, ride, dance, or game,
Nor mind the northern blast, or southern flame;
East winds may blow, and sudden fogs may fall,
But his hale constitution's proof to all;
He knows no change of weather by a corn,
Nor minds the black, the blue, or ruddy morn.
Here let no youth, extravagantly given,
Who values neither gold, nor health, nor heaven,
Think that our song encourages the crime
Of setting deep, or wasting too much time
On furious game, which makes the passions boil,
And the fair mean of health a weak'ning toil,
By violence excessive, or the pain,
Which ruin'd losers ever must sustain.
Our Hilaris despises wealth so won,
Nor does he love to be himself undone:
But from his sport can with a smile retire,
And warm his genius at Apollo's fire;
Find useful learning in th' inspired strains,
And bless the gen'rous poet for his pains.
Thus he by lit'rature and exercise
Improves his soul, and wards off each disease.
Health's op'ner foes we 've taken care to show,
Which make diseases in full torrents flow:
But when these ills intrude, do what we will,
Then hope for health from Clerk's (1) approved skill;
To such, well seen in nature's darker laws,
That for disorders can assign a cause;
Who know the virtues of salubrious plants,
And what each different constitution wants,
Apply for health. But shun the vagrant quack,
Who gulls the crowd with Andrew's comic clack;

(1) Dr. Clerk of Edinburgh, a physician of great ability, and a pupil of Pitcairne.

Or him that charges gazettes with his bills,
His anodynes, elixirs, tinctures, pills,
Who rarely ever cures, but often kills.
Nor trust thy life to the old woman's charms,
Who binds with knotted tape thy legs or arms,
Which they pretend will purple fevers cool,
And thus impose on some believing fool.
When agues shake, or fevers raise a flame,
Let your physician be a man of fame,
Of well-known learning, and in good respect
For prudence, honour, and a mind erect;
Nor scrimply save from what's to merit due;
He saves your whole estate who succours you.

Be grateful, Britons, for your temp'rate beams,
Your fertile plains, green hills, and silver streams,
O'erclad with corn, with groves, and many a mead,
Where rise green heights, where herds in millions feed;
Here useful plenty mitigates our care,
And health with freshest sweets embalms the air.

Upon those shores, where months of circling rays
Glance feebly on the snow, and frozen bays;
Where, wrapt in fur, the starving Lapland brood
Scarce keep the cold from curdling of their blood;
Here meagre want in all its pinching forms,
Combin'd with lengthen'd night and bleakest storms,
To combat joyful health and calm repose,
Which from an equal warmth and plenty flows.

Yet rather, O great Ruler of the day!
Bear me to Weygate, (1) or to Hudson's Bay,
Than scorch me on those dry and blasted plains,
Where rays direct inflame the boiling veins
Of gloomy negroes, who 're oblig'd to breathe
A thicken'd air with pestilential death;

(1) [Waigat's Straits on the Arctic ocean.]

Where range out o'er th' inhospitable wastes,
The hunger-edg'd and fierce devouring beasts;
Where serpents crawl which sure destruction bring,
Or in th' envenom'd tooth or forked sting;
Where fleeting sands ne'er yield t' industrious toil,
The golden sheaf, or plants for wine and oil:
Health must be here a stranger, where the rage
Of fev'rish beams forbids a lengthen'd age.

Ye Dutch! enjoy your dams, your bulwarks boast,
And war with Neptune for a sandy coast,
Whilst frighted by these deep tumultuous powers,
You scarce dare sleep in your subaqueous bowers;
Raise high your beds, and shun your croaking frogs,
And battle with tobacco-smoke your fogs;
Soak on your stoves, with spirits charge your veins,
To ward off agues and rheumatic pains.

Let the proud Spaniard strut on naked hills,
And vainly trace the plain for crystal rills;
Starve on a salad or a garlic head,
Pray for his daily roots, not daily bread:
Be sour, and jealous of his friend and wife,
Till want and spleen cut short his thread of life.

Whilst we on our auspicious island find
Whate'er can please the sense or cheer the mind.
Blest queen of isles! with a devout regard,
Allow me to kneel down and kiss thy sward,—
Thy flow'ry sward,—and offer Heav'n a vow,
Which gratitude and love to thee make due.
If e'er I from thy healthful limits stray,
Or by a wish, or word, a thought betray
Against thy int'rest or thy fair renown,
May never Daphne furnish me a crown;
Nor may the first-rate judges of our isle
Or read, or on my blythsome numbers smile!

Thalia here, sweet as the light, retir'd,
Commanding me to sing what she'd inspir'd,
And never mind the glooming critics bray:
The song was her's,—she spoke,—and I obey.

AN ODE

ON THE BIRTH OF THE MARQUIS OF DRUMLANRIG.

Help me, some god, with sic a muse
As Pope and Granville aft employ,
That I may flowing numbers chuse,
To hail the welcome princely boy.

But, bred up far frae shining courts,
In moorland glens, where nought I see,
But now and then some landart lass,
What sounds polite can flow frae me?

Yet, my blyth lass, amang the lave,
With honest heart her homage pays;
Though no sae nice she can behave,
Yet always as she thinks she says.

Arise, ye nymphs, on Nitha's plains,
And gar the craigs and mountains ring;
Rouse up the sauls of a' the swains,
While you the lovely infant sing.

Keep halyday on ilka howm,
With gowan garlands gird your brows;
Out o'er the dales in dances roam,
And shout around the jovial news.

By the good benison of Heav'n,
To free you frae the future fright
Of foreign lords, a babe is given
To guard your int'rest and your right.

With pleasure view your prince, who late
Up to the state of manhood run.
Now, to complete his happy fate,
Sees his ain image in a son.

A son, for whom be this your pray'r,
Ilk morning soon as dawn appears,—
God grant him an unmeasur'd skair
Of a' that grac'd his great forbeers:

That his great sire may live to see
Frae his delightfu' infant spring
A wise and stalwart progeny,
To fence their country and their king.

Still bless her Grace frae whom he sprung,
With blythsome heal her strength renew,
That through lang life she may be young,
And bring forth cautioners enow.

Watch well, ye tenants of the air,
Wha hover round our heads unseen,
Let dear Drumlanrig be your care,
Or when he lifts or steeks his een.

Ye hardy heroes, whase brave pains
Defeated ay th' invading rout,
Forsake a wee th' Elysian plains,
View, smile, and bless your lovely sprout.

Ye fair, wha 've ken'd the joys of love,
And glow with chearfu' heal and youth,
Sic as of auld might nurse a Jove,
Or lay the breast t' Alcides' mouth,—

The best and bonniest of ye a'
Take the sweet babie in your arms;
May he nought frae your bosom draw,
But nectar to nurse up his charms.

Harmoniously the notes express,
When singing you his dumps debar,
That discord never may impress
Upon his blooming mind a jar;

Sound a' the poet in his ears,
E'en while he's hanging at the breast;
Thus moulded, when he comes to years,
With an exalted gust he 'll feast

On lays immortal, which forbid
The death of Douglas' doughty name;
Or in oblivion let lie hid
The Hydes, their beauty and their fame.

1728.

AN ODE TO GRACE, COUNTESS OF ABOYNE, ON HER MARRIAGE-DAY.

In martial fields the hero toils,
And wades through blood to purchase fame;
O'er dreadful waves, from distant soils,
The merchant brings his treasures hame.

But fame and wealth no joys bestow,
If plac'd alane the cyphers stand;
'Tis to the figure Love they owe
The real joys that they command.

Blest he who love and beauty gains,
Gains what contesting kings might claim,
Might bring brave armies to the plains,
And loudly swell the blast of fame.

How happy then is young Aboyne!
Of how much heav'n is he possest!
How much the care of pow'rs divine,
Who lies in lovely Lockhart's breast!

Gazing in raptures on thy charms,
Thy sparkling beauty, shape, and youth,
He grasps all softness in his arms,
And sips the nectar from thy mouth.

If sympathetic likeness crave
Indulgent parents to be kind,
Each pow'r shall guard the charm they gave,
Venus thy face, Pallas thy mind.

O muse! we could—But stay thy flight;
The field is sacred as 'tis sweet:
Who dares to paint the ardent night,
When ravish'd youth and beauty meet?

Here we must draw a veil between,
And shade those joys too dazzling clear,
By ev'ry eye not to be seen,
Not to be heard by ev'ry ear.

Still in her smiles, ye Cupids, play;
Still in her eyes your revels keep;
Her pleasure be your care by day,
And whisper sweetness in her sleep.

Be banished each ill-natur'd care,
Base offspring of fantastic spleen;
Of access here you must despair,
Her breast for you is too serene.

May guardian angels hover round
Thy head, and ward aff all annoy,
Be all thy days with raptures crown'd,
And all thy nights be blest with joy!

AN ODE

ON THE MARRIAGE OF ALEX. BRODIE, OF BRODIE, TO MISS MARY SLEIGH.

When time was young, and innocence
With tender love govern'd this round,
No mean design to give offence
To constancy and truth was found:
All free from fraud, upon the flow'ry sward,
Lovers carest with fond and chaste regard.

From easy labours of the day,
Each pair to leafy bowers retir'd;
Contentment kept them ever gay,
While kind connubial sweets conspir'd,
With smiling quiet and balmy health, through life
To make the happy husband and the wife.

Our modern wits, in wisdom less,
With spirits weak, and wavering minds,
Void of resolve, poorly confess
They cannot relish ought that binds.
Let libertines of taste sae wondrous nice,
Despise to be confin'd in paradise.

While Brodie with his beauteous Sleigh,
On purest love can safely feast,
Quaff raptures from her sparkling eye,
And judge of heav'n within her breast:
No dubious cloud to gloom upon his joy,
Possessing of what's good can never cloy.

Her beauty might for ever warm,
Although her soul were less divine;
The brightness of her mind could charm,
Did less her graceful beauties shine;
But, both united, with full force inspire
The warmest wish, and the most lasting fire.

In your accomplish'd mate, young thane,
Without reserve ye may rejoice;
The Heav'ns your happiness sustain,
And all that think admire your choice.
Around your treasure circling arms entwine,
Be all thy pleasures her's, and her's be thine.

Rejoice, dear Mary, in thy youth,
The first of his brave ancient clan,
Whose soul delights in love and truth,
And view'd in every light a man
To whom the Fates with liberal hand have given
Good sense, true honour, and a temper even.

When love and reason thus unite
An equal pair in sacred ties,
They gain the human bliss complete,
And approbation from the skies:
Since you approve, kind Heaven, upon them pour
The best of blessings to their latest hour.

To you who rule above the sun,
To you who fly in fluid air,
We leave to finish what 's begun,
Still to reward and watch the pair.
Thus far the muse, who did an answer wait,
And heard the gods name happiness their fate.

1723.

THE FAIR ASSEMBLY,

A POEM.

TO THE MANAGERS.

Right Honourable Ladies,

How much is our whole nation indebted to your Ladyships for your reasonable and laudable undertaking to introduce politeness among us, by a cheerful entertainment, which is highly for the advantage of both body and mind, in all that is becoming in the brave and beautiful; well foreseeing that a barbarous rusticity ill suits them, who, in fuller years, must act with an address superior to the common class of mankind; and it is undeniable that nothing pleases more, nor commands more respect, that an easy, disengaged, and genteel manner. What can be more disagreeable than to see one, with a stupid impudence, saying and acting things the most shocking amongst the polite; or others (in plain Scots) blate, and not knowing how to behave!

Warmed with these reflections, and the beautifulness of the

subject, my thoughts have made their way in the following stanzas, which, with humility, I beg leave to present to your Ladyships. It is amazing to imagine, that any are so destitute of good sense and manners as to drop the least unfavourable sentiment against the Fair Assembly. It is to be owned, with regret, that the best of things have been abused. The church has been, and in many countries is, the chief place for assignations that are not warrantable. Wine, one of Heaven's kindly blessings, may be used to one's hurt. The beauty of the fair, which is the great preserver of harmony and society, has been the ruin of many. Learning, which assists in raising the mind of man up to the class of spirits, has given many a one's brain a wrong cast. So places, designed for healthful and mannerly dancing, have, by people of an unhappy turn, been debauched by introducing gaming, drunkenness, and indecent familiarities. But will any argue from these, that we must have no churches, no wine, no beauties, no literature, no dancing?—Forbid it Heaven! Noble and worthy Ladies, whatever is under your auspicious conduct must be improving and beneficial in every respect. May all the fair daughters copy after such virtuous and delightful patterns as you have been, and continue to be! That you may be long a blessing to the rising generation, is the sincere prayer of,

May it please your Ladyships,

Your most faithful and humble servant,

ALLAN RAMSAY.

EDIN. *June* 28*th*.

AWAKE, Thalia, and defend,
With cheerfu' carolling,
Thy bonny care; thy wings extend,
And bear me to your spring,
That harmony full force may lend
To reasons that I bring!—
Now Caledonian nymphs attend,
For 'tis to you I sing.

As lang as minds maun organs wear
Compos'd of flesh and blood,

We ought to keep them hale and clear,
With exercise (1) and food.
Then, but debate, it will appear,
That dancing must be good;
It stagnant humours sets a-steer,
And fines the purple blood.

Diseases, heaviness, and spleen,
And ill things mony mae,
That gar the lazy fret and grane,
With visage dull and blae,—
'Tis dancing can do mair alane,
Than drugs frae far away,
To ward aff these, make nightly pain,
And sour the shining day.

Health is a prize—yet meikle mair
In dancing we may find;
It adds a lustre to the fair,
And, when the fates unkind
Cloud with a blate and awkward air
A genius right refin'd,
The sprightly art (2) helps to repair
This blemish on the mind.

How mony do we daily see
Right scrimp of wit and sense, (3)

(1) The wise for health on exercise depend;
God never made his works for man to mend.
DRYDEN.

(2) Since nothing appears to me to give children so much becoming confidence and behaviour, and so raise them to the conversation of those above their age, as dancing, I think they should be taught to dance as soon as they are capable of learning it; for though this consists only in outward gracefulness of motion, yet, I know not how, it gives manly thoughts and carriage more than any thing. LOCKE.

(3) It is certain, that for want of a competent knowledge in this art of dancing, which should have been learned when young, the public loses many a man of excellent intellectuals and unbiassed probity, purely for

Who gain their aims aft easily
By well-bred confidence?
Then, whate'er helps to qualify
A rustic negligence,
Maun without doubt a duty be,
And should give nae offence.

Hell's doctrine 's dung, when equal pairs
Together join their hands,
And vow to soothe ilk other's cares,
In haly wedlock's bands:
Sae when to dance the maid prepares,
And flush'd with sweetness stands,
At her the wounded lover stares,
And yields to Heaven's commands.

The first command (1) he soon obeys,
While love inspires ilk notion;
His wishing look his heart displays,
While his lov'd mate's in motion;
He views her with a blythe amaze,
And drinks with deep devotion
That happy draught, that through our days
Is own'd a cordial potion.

The cordial which conserves our life,
And makes it smooth and easy;
Then, ilka wanter wale a wife,
Ere eild and humdrums seize ye,
Whase charms can silence dumps or strife,
And frae the rake release ye;
Attend th' Assembly, where there's rife
Of virtuous maids to please ye.

want of that so necessary accomplishment, assurance; while the pressing knave or fool shoulders him out, and gets the prize. MR. WEAVER.

(1) Dixit eis Deus, fœtificate, augescite, et implete terram.

These modest maids inspire the muse,
In flowing strains to shaw
Their beauties, which she likes to roose,
And let th' envious blaw;
That task she canna well refuse,
Wha single says them na.—
To paint Belinda first we chuse,
With breasts like driven snaw;

Like lily-banks see how they rise,
With a fair glen between,
Where living streams, blue as the skies,
Are branching upward seen,
To warm her mouth, where rapture lies,
And smiles that banish spleen,
Wha strikes with love and saft surprise,
Where'er she turns her een.

Sabella, gracefully complete,
Straight as the mountain-pine,
Like pearl and rubies set in jet,
Her lovely features shine;
In her the gay and solid meet,
And blended are sae fine,
That when she moves her lips or feet,
She seems some Power divine.

O Daphne! sweeter than the dawn,
When rays glance o'er the height,
Diffusing gladness o'er the lawn,
With streaks of rising light.
The dewy flowers, when newly blawn,
Come short of that delight
Which thy far fresher beauties can
Afford our joyfu' sight.

How easy sits sweet Celia's dress!
Her gait how gently free!
Her steps throughout the dance express
The justest harmony;
And when she sings, all must confess,
Wha 're blest to hear and see,
They 'd deem 't their greatest happiness
T' enjoy her company.

And wha can ca' his heart his ain,
That hears Aminta speak?
Against Love's arrows shields are vain,
When he aims frae her cheek;
Her cheek, where roses free from stain,
In glows of youdith beek;
Unmingled sweets her lips retain,
These lips she ne'er should steek,

Unless when fervent kisses close
That av'nue of her mind,
Through which true wit in torrents flows,
As speaks the nymph design'd,
The brag and toast of wits and beaux,
And wonder of mankind;
Whase breast will prove a blest repose,
To him with whom she'll bind.

See with what gaiety, yet grave,
Serena swims alang!
She moves a goddess 'mang the lave,
Distinguish'd in the thrang.
Ye sourocks, hafflines fool, haf knave!
Wha hate a dance or sang,
To see this stately maid behave,
'Twad gie your hearts a twang!

Your hearts, said I?—troth I'm to blame;
I had amaist forgotten,
That ye to nae sic organ claim,—
Or if ye do, 't is rotten!
A saul with sic a thowless flame,
Is sure a silly sot ane;
Ye scandalise the human frame
When in our shape begotten.

These lurdanes came just in my light,
As I was tending Chloe,
With jet-black een that sparkle bright,
She 's all o'er form'd for joy;
With neck, and waist, and limbs as tight
As her 's wha drew the boy
Frae feeding flocks upon the height,
And fled with him to Troy.

Now Myra dances: mark her mien,
Sae disengag'd and gay,
Mix'd with that innocence that 's seen,
In bonny ewe-bught May,
Wha wins the garland on the green,
Upon some bridal day;
Yet she has graces for a queen,
And might a sceptre sway.

What lays, Calista, can commend
The beauties of thy face!
Whase fancy can sae tow'ring stend,
Thy merits a' to trace?
Frae boon the starns, some bard descend,
And sing her ev'ry grace,
Whase wondrous worth may recommend
Her to a god's embrace.

A seraph wad our Aikman paint,
Or draw a lively wit?
The features of a happy saint,
Say, art thou fond to hit?
Or a Madona compliment,
With lineaments maist fit?
Fair copies thou need'st never want,
If bright Calista sit.

Mella the heaviest heart can heeze,
And sourest thoughts expel,
Her station grants her rowth and ease,
Yet is the sprightly belle
As active as the eydent bees,
Wha rear the waxen cell;
And place her in what light you please,
She still appears hersell.

Beauties on beauties come in view
Sae thick, that I 'm afraid
I shall not pay to ilk their due,
Till Phœbus lend mair aid.
But this in gen'ral will had true,
And may be safely said,
There 's ay a something shining new
In ilk delicious maid.

Sic as against th' Assembly speak,
The rudest sauls betray,
When matrons, noble, wise, and meek,
Conduct the healthfu' play;
Where they appear, nae vice dare keek,
But to what 's good gives way,
Like night, soon as the morning creek
Has usher'd in the day.

Dear Ed'nburgh shaw thy gratitude,
And of sic friends make sure,
Wha strive to mak our minds less rude,
And help our wants to cure;
Acting a gen'rous part and good,
In bounty to the poor;
Sic virtues, if right understood,
Should ev'ry heart allure.

ON THE ROYAL ARCHERS

SHOOTING FOR THE BOWL,

The 6th of July 1724.

Again the year returns the day
That 's dedicat to joy and play,
To bonnets, bows, and wine.
Let all who wear a sullen face,
This day meet with a due disgrace,
And in their sourness pine;
Be shunn'd as serpents that wad stang
The hand that gies them food;
Sic we debar frae lasting sang,
And all their grumbling brood.

While to gain sport and halesome air,
The blythsome spirit draps dull care,
And starts frae bus'ness free;
Now to the fields the Archers bend,
With friendly minds the day to spend,
In manly game and glee;
First striving wha shall win the bowl,
And then gar 't flow with wine:

Sic manly sport refresh'd the soul
Of stalwart men lang syne,

Ere parties thrawn, and int'rest vile,
Debauch'd the grandeur of our isle,
And made e'en brethren faes;
Syne truth frae friendship was exil'd,
And fause the honest hearts beguil'd,
And led them in a maze
Of politics. With cunning craft,
The Issachars of state,
Frae haly drums first dang us daft,
Then drown'd us in debate.

Drap this unpleasing thought, dear muse;
Come view the men thou likes to roose:
To Bruntsfield-green let 's hie,
And see the royal Bowmen strive,
Wha far the feather'd arrows drive,
All soughing thro' the sky;
Ilk etling with his utmost skill,
With artfu' draft and stark,
Extending nerves with hearty will,
In hopes to hit the mark.

See Hamilton, wha moves with grace,
Chief of the Caledonian race
Of peers, to whom is due
All honours, and a fair renown;
Wha lays aside his ducal crown,
Sometimes to shade his brow
Beneath St. Andrew's bonnet blue,
And joins to gain the prize;
Which shaws true merit match'd by few,
Great, affable, and wise.

This day, with universal voice,
The Archers him their chieftain chose:
Consenting Powers divine,
They bless the day with general joy,
By giving him a princely boy,
To beautify his line;
Whose birth-day in immortal sang
Shall stand in fair record,
While bended strings the Archers twang,
And beauty is ador'd.

Next Drummond view, who gives their law,
It glads our hearts to see him draw
The bow, and guide the band;
He, like the saul of a' the lave,
Does with sic honour still behave,
As merits to command.
Blyth be his hours, hale be his heart,
And lang may he preside!
Lang the just fame of his desert
Shall unborn Archers read,—

How on this fair propitious day,
With conquest leal he bore away
The bowl victoriously;
With following shafts in number four,
Success the like ne'er ken'd before,
The prize to dignify.
Haste to the garden then bedeen,
The rose and laurel pow,
And plait a wreath of white and green,
To busk the victor's brow.

The victor crown, who with his bow,
In spring of youth and am'rous glow,
Just fifty years sinsyne,

The silver arrow made his prize,
Yet ceases not in fame to rise,
And with new feats to shine.
May every Archer strive to fill
His bonnet, and observe
The pattern he has set with skill,
And praise like him deserve!

ON THE ROYAL ARCHERS

MARCHING UNDER THE DUKE OF HAMILTON TO SHOOT FOR THE ARROW,

The 4th of August 1724.

Apollo! patron of the lyre,
And of the valiant Archers' bow,
Me with sic sentiments inspire,
As may appear from thee they flow,
When, by thy special will and high command,
I sing the merits of the Royal Band.

Now, like themselves, again the Archers raise
The bow, in brave array, and claim our lays.
Phœbus, well-pleas'd, shines from the blue serene,
Glents on the stream, and gilds the chequer'd green.
The winds lie hush in their remotest caves,
And Forth with gentle swell his margin laves.
See to his shore the gathering thousands roll,
As if one gen'ral sp'rit inform'd the whole.
The bonniest fair of a' Great Britain's isle,
From chariots and the crowded casements smile;
Whilst horse and foot promiscuous form a lane,
Extending far along the destin'd plain,
Where, like Bellona's troops, or guards of love,
The Archers in their proper habits move.

Their guardian saint, from yon ethereal height,
Displays th' auspicious cross of blazing light;
While on his care he cheerfully looks down,
The pointed thistle wears his ruby crown,
And seems to threat, arm'd ready to engage,—
"No man unpunish'd shall provoke my rage;"
Well pleas'd the rampant lion smooths his mane,
And gambols gay upon his golden plain.

Like as the sun, when wintry clouds are past,
And fragrant gales succeed the stormy blast,
Shines on the earth, the fields look fresh and gay,
So seem the Archers on this joyful day;
Whilst with his graceful mien, and aspect kind,
Their leader raises ev'ry follower's mind,
Who love the conduct of a youth whose birth
To nothing yields but his superior worth;
And happier is with his selected train,
Than Philip's son, who strove a world to gain:
That prince whole nations to destruction drove,
This prince delights his country to improve.
A monarch rais'd upon a throne may nod,
And pass among the vulgar for a god;
While men of penetration justly blame
Those who hang on their ancestors for fame;
But own the dignity of high descent,
When the successor's spirit keeps the bent,
Which thro' revolving ages grac'd the line
With all those qualities that brightest shine.
The Archers' chieftain thus, with active mind,
In all that 's worthy never falls behind
Those noble characters from whom he sprung,
In hist'ry fam'd, whom ancient bards have sung.
See, from his steady hand and aiming eye,
How straight in equal lengths the arrows fly!

Both at one end close by the mark they stand,
Which points him worthy of his brave command;
That as they to his num'rous merits bow,
This victory makes homage fully due.
Sage Drummond next the chief, with counsel grave,
Becomes his post, instructing all that's brave:
So Pallas seem'd, who Mentor's form put on,
To make a hero of Ulysses' son.
Each officer his character maintains,
While love and honour gratify their pains;
No view inferior brings them to the field,
To whom great chiefs of clans with pleasure yield.
No hidden murmur swells the Archer's heart,
While each with gladness acts his proper part;
No factious strife, not plots, the bane of states,
Give birth to jealousies or dire debates;
Nor less their pleasure who obedience pay,
Good order to preserve, as those who sway.
O smiling muse! full well thou knows the fair,
Admire the courteous, and with pleasure share
Their love with him that 's generous and brave,
And can with manly dignity behave.
Then haste to warn thy tender care with speed,
Lest by some random shaft their hearts may bleed,
Yon dangerous youths both Mars and Venus arm,
While with their double darts they threat and charm;
Those at their side forbid invading foes,
With vain attempt true courage to oppose;
While shafts mair subtle darted from their eye,
Thro' softer hearts with silent conquest fly.

THE POET'S THANKS TO THE ARCHERS,

ON BEING ADMITTED INTO THEIR ROYAL COMPANY.

The restless mind of man ne'er tires
To please his favourite desires.
He chiefly that to fame aspires,
With soul enlarg'd grasps with delight
At every favour which conspires
To place him in a fairer light.
Such are the followers of the Nine,
Who aim at glory for reward,
Whose flowing fancies brighter shine,
When from the best they meet regard.

I, not the least now of that train,
Who frae the Royal Archers gain
Applause, while lovely ladies deign
To take me too beneath their care;
Then tho' I boast, I am not vain,
Thus guarded by the brave and fair:
For which kind fate to me this day,
First to the Powers Supreme I bow,
And next my gratitude I pay,
Brave sons of Caledon to you.

ALLAN RAMSAY.

1728.

ON SEEING THE ARCHERS DIVERTING THEMSELVES AT THE BUTS AND ROVERS.

AT THE DESIRE OF SIR WILLIAM BENNET.

HIS DEMAND.

"The Rovers and the Buts you saw,
And him who gives despotic law.
In numbers sing what you have seen,
Both in the garden and the green;
And how with wine they clos'd the day,
In harmless toasts, both blyth and gay;
This to remember be 't thy care,
How they did justice to the fair."

THE ANSWER.

Sir, I with much delight beheld
The Royal Archers on the field.
Their garb, their manner, and their game,
Wakes in the mind a martial flame;
To see them draw the bended yew,
Brings bygane ages to our view,
When burnish'd swords and whizzing flanes
Forbade the Norwegans and Danes,
Romans and Saxons, to invade
A nation of nae foes afraid;
Whase virtue and true valour sav'd
Them bravely from their b'ing enslav'd:
Esteeming 't greater not to be,
Than lose their darling liberty.

How much unlike!—But mum for that,
Some beaux may snarl if we should prat.
When av'rice, luxury, and ease
A tea-fac'd generation please,
Whase pithless limbs in silks o'er-clad,
Scarce bear the lady-handed lad
Frae 's looking-glass into the chair,
Which bears him to blaflum the fair,
Wha by their actions come to ken
Sic are but in appearance men.
These ill could bruik, without a beild
To sleep in boots upon the field;
Yet rise as glorious as the sun,
To end what greatly they begun;
Nor could it suit their taste and pride
To eat an ox boil'd in his hide;
Or quaff pure element, ah me!
Without ream, sugar, and bohea.
Hail, noble ghosts of each brave sire!
Whose sauls glow'd with a god-like fire!
If you 're to guardian posts assign'd,
And can with greatness warm the mind;
Breath manly ardours in your race,
Communicate that martial grace,
By which thro' ages you maintain'd
The Caledonian rights unstain'd;
That when our nation makes demands,
She may ne'er want brave hearts and hands.
Here, Sir, I must your pardon ask,
If I have started from my task;
For when the fancy takes a flight,
We seldom ken where it will light.
But we return to view the band,
Under the regular command

Of ane (1) wha arbitrarly sways,
And makes it law whate'er he says.
Him honour and true reason rule,
Which makes submission to his will
Nae slav'ry, but a just delight,
Whiles he takes care to keep them right;
Wha never lets a cause depend
Till the pursuer's power 's at end;
But, like a minister of state,
He speaks, and there 's no more debate:
Best government, were subjects sure
To find a prince fit for sic pow'r.
But drop we cases not desir'd,
To paint the Archers now retir'd
From healthfu' sport, to cheerfu' wine,
Strength to recruit, and wit refine;
Where innocent and blythsome tale
Permits nae sourness to prevail:
Here, Sir, you never fail to please,
Wha can, in phrase adapt with ease,
Draw to the life a' kind of fowks,
Proud shaups, dull coofs, and gabbling gowks,
Gielaingers, and each greedy wight,
You place them in their proper light;
And when true merit comes in view,
You fully pay them what 's their due.
While circling wheels the hearty glass,
Well-flavour'd with some lovely lass;
Or with the bonny fruitfu' dame,
Wha brightens in the nuptial flame:
"My lord, your toast," the preses cries,
"To lady Charlotte," he replies.
"Now, Sir, let 's hear your beauty bright."
"To lady Jean," returns the knight.

(1) Mr. David Drummond, president of the council.

To Hamilton a health gaes round,
And one to Eglinton is crown'd.
How sweet they taste! "Now, Sir," you say;
Then drink to her that 's far away,
The lov'd Southesk. Neist, Sir, you name;
"I give you Basil's handsome dame."
Is 't come to me? then toast the fair
That 's fawn, O Cockburn, to thy skair.
How hearty went these healths about!
How blythly were they waughted out!
To a' the stately, fair, and young,
Frae Haddington and Hoptoun sprung;
To Lithgow's daughter in her bloom,—
To dear Mackay, and comely Home,—
To Creightons every way divine,—
To Haldane streight as any pine.
O how delicious was the glass
Which was perfum'd with lovely Bess!
And sae these rounds were flowing gi'en,
To sisters Nisbet, Nell and Jean,—
To sweet Montgomery shining fair,—
To Priestfield twins, delightfu' pair,—
To Katies four of beauteous fame,
Stuart and Cochran lady claim,
Third Hamilton, fourth Ardress name,—
To Peggies Pentland, Bang, and Bell,—
To Minto's mate, and lively Nell,—
To Gordons ravishingly sweet,—
To Maule, in whom the graces meet,—
To Hepburn, wha has charms in store,—
To Pringle, harmony all o'er,—
To the polite Kinloch and Hay,—
To Wallace, beautifu' and gay,—
To Campbell, Skeen, and Rutherfoord,—
To Maitland fair, the much ador'd,—

To Lockhart with the sparkling een,—
To bonny Crawford ever green,—
To Stuarts mony a dazzling bairn,
Of Invernytie and Denairn,—
To gracefu' Sleigh and Oliphant,—
To Nasmith, Baird, Scot, Grier, and Grant,—
To Clerk, Anstruther, Frank, and Graham,—
To Deans, agreeing with her name.
Where are we now?—Come, to the best
In Christendom, and a' the rest!
Dear nymphs unnam'd, lay not the blame
On us, or on your want of fame,
That in this list you do not stand;
For heads give way. But there's my hand,
The neist time we have sic a night,
We 'll not neglect to do ye right.
Thus beauties rare, and virgins fine,
With blooming belles, enliven'd our wine,
Till a' our noses 'gan to shine.
Then down we look'd upon the great,
Who 're plagu'd with guiding of the state;
And pity'd each phlegmatic wight,
Whose creeping sauls ken nae delight,
But keept themselves aye on the gloom,
Startled with fears of what 's to come.
Poor passion! sure by fate design'd
The mark of an inferior mind;
To Heav'n a filial fear we awe,
But fears nane else a man should shaw.
Lads, cock your bonnets, bend your bows,
And, or in earnest, or in mows,
Be still successful, ever glad,
In Mars's or in Venus' bed;
Sae bards aloud shall chaunt your praise,
And ladies shall your spirits raise.

Thus, Sir, I've sung what you requir'd,
As Mars and Venus have inspir'd;
While they inspire, and you approve,
I 'll sing brave deeds, and safter love,
Till great Apollo say, "Well done!"
And own me for his native son.

1728.

AN ODE
TO THE EARL OF HARTFORD.
AND THE REST OF THE MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY OF BRITISH ANTIQUARIES.

To Hartford, and his learned friends,
Whas fame for science far extends,
A Scottish muse her duty sends,
From Pictish towers:
Health, length of days, and happy ends,
Be ever yours!

Your gen'rous cares make light arise
From things obscure to vulgar eyes,
Finding where hidden knowledge lies,
T' improve the mind;
And most delightfully surprise,
With thoughts refin'd.

When you the broke inscription read,
Or amongst antique ruins tread,
And view remains of princes dead,
In funeral piles,
Your penetration seems decreed
To bless these isles.

Where Romans form'd their camps of old,
The gods and urns of curious mould,
Their medals struck of brass or gold,
'Tis you can show;
And truth of what 's in story told,
To you we owe.

How beneficial is the care
That brightens up the classic lear!
When you the documents compare
With authors old,
You ravish, when we can so fair
Your light behold.

Without your comments, each old book
By all the world would be forsook;
For who of thought would deign to look
On doubtful works,
Till by your skilful hands they 're struck
With sterling marks?

By this your learning men are fir'd
With love of glory, and inspir'd,
Like ancient heroes, who ne'er tir'd
To win a name;
And, by their godlike acts, aspir'd
T' immortal fame.

Your useful labours shall endure,
True merit shall your fame secure,
And will posterity allure
To search about
For truth, by demonstration sure,
Which leaves no doubt.

The muse foresees brave Hartford's name
Shall to all writers be a theme,
To last while arts and greatness claim
Th' historian's skill,
Or the chief instrument of fame,
The poet's quill.

Pembroke 's a name to Britain dear
For learning and brave deeds of weir;
The genius still continues clear
In him whose art
In your rare fellowship can bear
So great a part.

Bards yet unborn shall tune their lays,
And monuments harmonious raise,
To Winchelsea and Devon's praise,
Whose high desert,
And virtues bright, like genial rays,
Can life impart.

Nor want we Caledonians sage,
Who read the painted vellum page;
No strangers to each antique stage,
And Druids' cells,
And sacred ruins of each age,
On plains and fells.

Amongst all those of the first rate,
Our learned Clerk, (1) blest with the fate
Of thinking right, can best relate
These beauties all,
Which bear the marks of ancient date,
Be-north the wall:

(1) Sir John Clark of Pennycuick, Bart.

The wall which Hadrian first begun,
And bold Severus carried on,
From rising to the setting sun,
On Britain's cost,
Our ancestors' fierce arms to shun,
Which gall'd them most.

But now no need of walls or towers,
Ag'd enmity no more endures,
Brave Britain joins her warlike powers,
That always dare
To open and to shut the doors
Of peace and war.

Advance, great men, your wise design,
And prosper in the task divine;
Draw from antiquity's deep mine
The precious ore,
And in the British annals shine
Till time's no more.

1728.

ADVICE TO MR. —— ON HIS MARRIAGE.

All joy to you and your Amelie,
May ne'er your purse nor vigour fail ye!
But have a care how you employ
Them baith and tutor well your joy.
Frae me, an auld dab, tak advice,
And hane them baith if ye be wise;
For warld's wasters, like poor cripples,
Look blunt with poverty and ripples.

There 's an auld saw, to ilk ane *notum*—
"Better to save at braird than bottom."
Which means, your purse and person use,
As canny poets do their muse;
For whip and spurring never prove
Effectual, or in verse or love.
Sae far, my friend, in merry strain,
I 've given a douse advice and plain,
And honestly discharg'd my conscience,
In lines, tho' hamely, far frae nonsense.
Some other chiel may daftly sing,
That kens but little of the thing,
And blaw ye up with windy fancies,
That he has thigit frae romances,
Of endless raptures, constant glee,
That never was, nor ne'er will be.
Alake! poor mortals are not gods,
And therefore often fall at odds;
But little quarrels now and then,
Are nae great faults 'tween wife and man;
These help right aften to improve
His understanding, and her love.
Your rib and you, 'bout hours of drinking,
May chance to differ in your thinking;
But that's just like a shower in May,
That gars the sun-blink seem mair gay.
If e'er she tak the pet, or fret,
Be calm, and yet maintain your state;
And, smiling, ca' her little foolie,
Syne with a kiss evite a toolie.
This method 's ever thought the braver,
Then either cuffs, or clish-ma-claver;
It shaws a spirit low and common,
That with ill-nature treats a woman;

They 're of a make sae nice and fair,
They must be manag'd with some care;
Respect them, they 'll be kind and civil;
But disregarded, prove the devil.

1728.

AN ANACREONTIC ON LOVE.

When a' the warld had closed their een,
Fatigu'd with labour, care, and din,
And quietly ilka weary wight
Enjoy'd the silence of the night;
Then Cupid, that ill-deedy geat,
With a' his pith rapt at my yeat.
Surpris'd, through sleep, I cry'd, "Wha's that?"
Quoth he, "A poor young wean, a' wat!
Oh! haste ye apen,—fear nae skaith,
Else soon this storm will be my death."
With his complaint my soul grew wae,
For, as he said, I thought it sae.
I took a light and fast did rin
To let the chittering infant in;
And he appear'd to be nae kow,
For a' his quiver, wings, and bow;
His bairnly smiles and looks gave joy,
He seem'd sae innocent a boy.
I led him ben but any pingle,
And beekt him brawly at my ingle;
Dighted his face, his handies thow'd,
Till his young cheeks like roses glow'd.
But soon, as he grew warm and fain,
"Let's try," quoth he, "if that the rain

Has wrang'd aught of my sporting gear,
And if my bow-string's hale and fier."
With that his arch'ry graith he put
In order, and made me his butt;
Mov'd back a-piece, his bow he drew,
Fast through my breast his arrow flew.
That dune, as if he'd found a nest,
He leugh, and with unsonsy jest,
Cry'd, "Nibour, I'm right blyth in mind,
That in good tift my bow I find!
Did not my arrow fly right smart?
You'll find it sticking in your heart."

AN ADDRESS OF THE MUSE

TO GEORGE DRUMMOND, THE LORD PROVOST,

AND TO THE TOWN COUNCIL OF EDINBURGH.

My Lord, my patron, good and kind,—
Whose every act of generous care
The patriot shows, and trusty friend,—
While favours, by your thoughts refin'd,
Both public and the private share,
To you the muse her duteous homage pays,
While Edinburgh's interest animates her lays.

Nor will the best some hints refuse;
The narrow soul that least brings forth,
To an advice the rarest bows;
Which the extensive mind allows,
Being conscious of its genuine worth,
Fears no eclipse; nor with dark pride declines
A ray from light that far inferior shines.

Our reason and advantage call
Us to preserve what we esteem;
And each should contribute, though small,
Like silver rivulets that fall
In one and make a spreading stream.
So should a city all her care unite,
T' engage with entertainments of delight.

Man for society was made,
His search of knowledge has no bound;
Through the vast deep he loves to wade;
But subjects ebb, and spirits fade,
On wilds and thinly peopled ground.
Then where the world, in miniature employs
Its various arts, the soul its wish enjoys.

Sometimes the social mind may rove,
And trace with contemplation high,
The natural beauties of the grove,
Pleas'd with the turtle's making love,
While birds chant in a summer sky;
But when cold winter snows the naked fields,
The city then its changing pleasure yields.

Then you, to whom pertains the care,
And have the power to act aright,
Nor pains nor prudent judging spare,
The Good Town's failings to repair,
And give her lovers more delight.
Much you have done, both useful and polite;
O! never tire, till every plan's complete.

Some may object, we money want,
Of every project soul and nerve.
'Tis true;—but sure, the Parliament
Will ne'er refuse frankly to grant
Such funds as good designs deserve.

The thriving well of each of Britain's towns,
Adds to her wealth, and more her grandeur crowns.

Allow that fifteen thousand pounds
Were yearly on improvements spent;
If luxury produce the funds,
And well laid out, there are no grounds
For murmuring, or the least complaint:
Materials all within our native coast,
The poor's employ'd, we gain, and nothing's lost.

Two hundreds, for five pounds a-day,
Will work like Turkish galley-slaves;
And ere they sleep, they will repay
Back all the public forth did lay;
For small support that nature craves.
Thus kept at work, few twangs of guilt they feel,
And are not tempt'd by pinching want to steal.

Most wisely did our city move,
When Hope, (1) who judges well and nice,
Was chosen fittest to improve
From rushy tufts the pleasing grove,
From bogs a rising paradise.
Since earth's foundation to our present day
The beauteous plain in mud neglected lay.

Now, evenly planted, hedg'd and drain'd,
Its verdures please the scent and sight;
And here the fair may walk unpain'd,
Her flowing silks and shoes unstain'd,
Round the green circus of delight;
Which shall by ripening time still sweeter grow,
And Hope be fam'd while Scotsmen draw the bow.

(1) Mr. Hope of Rankeilour, who has beautifully planted, hedged, and drained Straiton's meadow, which was formerly the bottom of a lake.

Ah! while I sing, the northern air,
Through gore and carnage gives offence;
Which should not, while a river fair,
Without our walls, flows by so near;
Carriage from thence but small expense;
The useful corporation too would find,
By working there, more health and ease of mind. (1)

Then sweet our northern flow'rs would blow,
And sweet our northern alleys end;
Sweet all the northern springs would flow;
Sweet northern trees and herbs would grow;
And from the lake a field be gain'd,
Where on the spring's green margin by the dawn,
Our maids might wash, and blanch their lace and lawn.

Forbid a nasty pack to place
On stalls unclean their herbs and roots,
On the High street a vile disgrace,
And tempting to our infant-race
To swallow poison with their fruits. (2)

(1) [* A full score of years after our poet had passed to his grave, the hapless Fergusson recommended that

"Gillespie's snuff should prime the nose
Of her that to the market goes,
If she wad like to shun the smells
That float around frae market-cells."

And the lapse of a century has not seen Edinburgh provided with an abattoir or proper slaughter-house. Well may we echo Fergusson's lines:

"Now, wha in Albion could expect
O cleanliness sic great neglect!"]

(2) With the more freedom some thoughts in these stanzas are advanced, because several citizens of the best thinking, both in and out of the magistracy, incline to and have such views, if they were not opposed by some of gross old-fashioned notions. Such will tell you, "O! the street of Edinburgh is the finest garden of Scotland." And how can it otherwise be, considering how well it is dunged every night! But this abuse we hope to see reformed soon, when the cart and warning-bell shall leave the lazy slattern without excuse after ten at night. [* The

Give them a station where less spoil'd and seen,
The healthful herbage may keep fresh and clean.

Besides they straiten much our street,
When those who drive the hack and dray,
In drunk and rude confusion meet,
We know not where to turn our feet:
Mortal our hazard every way.
Too oft the ag'd, the deaf, and little fry,
Hemm'd in with stalls, crush'd under axles lie.

Clean order yields a vast delight;
And geniuses that brightest shine
Prefer the pleasure of the sight
Justly, to theirs who day and night
Sink health and active thought in wine.
Happy the man that's clean in house and weed,
Though water be his drink, and oats his bread!

Kind Fate! on them whom I admire,
Bestow neat rooms and gardens fair,—
Pictures that speak the painter's fire,—
And learning which the Nine inspire,—
With friends that all his thoughts may share,—
A house in Edinburgh, when the sullen storm
Defaces Nature's joyous fragrant form.

High-street, between the Tron church and St. Giles' continued to be the site of the vegetable market for many years after our poet had penned his well-meant remonstrance. Yet Mr. Drummond, to whom these verses were addressed, did much for the improvement and embellishment of his native city; and under his magistracy

"Auld Reekie thrave and grew
Delightfu' to her childers' view."

He promoted the extension of the city towards the north; and, more praise-worthy still, this "wale o' men" was most active in the establishment of that noble institution,—the Royal Infirmary.]

O! may we hope to see a stage,
Fill'd with the best of such as can
Smile down the follies of the age,
Correct dull pride and party-rage,
And cultivate the growing man;
And show the virgin every proper grace,
That makes her mind as comely as her face.

Nor will the most devout oppose,
When with a strict judicious care
The scenes most virtuous shall be chose,
That numerous are; forbidding those
That shock the modest, good and fair.
The best of things may often be abus'd;
That argues not, when right, to be refus'd.

Thus, what our fathers' wasting blood
Of old from the South Britons won,
When Scotland reach'd to Humber's flood,
We shall regain by arts less rude,
And bring the best and fairest down
From England's northern counties, nigh as far
Distant from court as we of Pictland are.

Thus far, inspir'd with honest zeal,
These thoughts are offer'd, with submission,
By your own bard, who ne'er shall fail
The int'rest of the commonweal,
While you indulge and grant permission
To your oblig'd, thus humbly to rehearse
His honest and well-meaning thoughts in verse.

1728.

TO ALEXANDER MURRAY OF BROUGHTON,

ON HIS MARRIAGE.

'Tis conquering love can move
The best to all that's great;
It sweetly binds two equal minds,
And makes a happy state,
When such as Murray, of a temper even,
And honour'd worth, receives a mate from Heaven.

Joy to you, Sir! and joy to her,
Whose softer charms can sooth,
With smiling power, a sullen hour,
And make your life flow smooth!
Man's but unfinish'd, till by Hymen's ties,
His sweeter half lock'd in his bosom lies.

The general voice approves your choice,
All sentiments agree,
With fame allow'd, that she 's a good
Branch sprung from a right tree.
Long may the graces of her mind delight
Your soul, and long her beauties bless your sight!

May the bright guard who love reward,
With man recoin'd again,
In offspring fair, make her their care,
In hours of joyful pain!
And may my patron healthful live to see
By her a brave and bonny progeny.

Let youthful swains who 'tend your plains,
Touch the tun'd reed, and sing,
While maids advance in sprightly dance,
All in the rural ring;
And, with the muse, thank the immortal Powers,
Placing with joy Euphemia's name with yours.

AN ODE

ON THE FALLING OF A SLATE FROM A HOUSE ON THE BREAST OF MRS. M. M——.

Was Venus angry, and in spite,
Allow'd that stane to fa',
Imagining those breasts so white
Contain'd a heart of snaw?
Was her wing'd son sae cankert set,
To wound her lovely skin,
Because his arrows could not get
A passage farder in?
No!—she is to love's goddess dear,
Her smiling boy's delight.
It was some hag, that doughtna bear
Sic charms to vex her sight.
Some silly, sour, pretending saint,
In heart an imp of hell,
Whase hale religion lies in cant,
Her virtue in wrang zeal:
She threw the stane, and ettled death;
But watching sylphs flew round,
To guard dear Madie from all skaith,
And quickly cur'd the wound.

THE VISION.(1)

Bedoun the bents of Banquo-brae,
Mylane I wandert waif and wae,
Musand our main mischaunce;
How be thae faes we ar undone,
That staw the sacred stane (2) frae Scone,
And lead us sic a daunce;
Quhyle Ingland's Edert taks our tours,
And Scotland first obeys;
Rude ruffians ransak ryal bours,
And Baliol homage pays:
Throch feidom, (3) our freedom
Is blotit with this skore,
Quhat Romans', or no man's,
Pith culd eir do before.

The air grew ruch with bousteous thuds;
Bauld Boreas branglit outthrow the cluds,
Maist lyke a drunken wicht;
The thunder crakt, and flauchts did rift,
Frae the blak vissart of the lift;
The forest shuke with fricht;
Nae birds abune thair wing extenn,
They ducht not byde the blast;
Ilk beist bedeen bang'd to thair den,
Until the storm was past:

(1) [* See Remarks, p. 82 *ante*. Sir Walter Scott pronounces 'The Vision' "a fine poem" and of a character superior to Ramsay's ordinary poetry.]

(2) The old chair (now in Westminster abbey) in which the Scots kings were always crowned, wherein there is a piece of marble with this inscription:

"Ni fallat fatum, Scoti, quocunque locatum
Invenient lapidem, regnare tenentur ibidem."

(3) [* See note, p. 26 *ante*. Dr. Jamieson singularly enough explains *feidom* here to mean 'a state of enmity.']

Ilk creature, in nature,
That had a spunk of sense,
In neid then, with speid then,
Methocht, cry'd in defence.

To se a morn in May sae ill,
I deimt dame Nature was gane will,
To rair with rackles reil;
Quhairfor to put me out of pain,
And skonce my skap and shanks frae rain,
I bure me to a beil;
Up ane heich craig that hungit alaft,
Out owre a canny cave,—
A curious crove of nature's craft,
Quhilk to me schelter gaif:
There vexit, perplexit,
I leint me down to weip;
In brief ther, with grief ther,
I dottard owre on sleip.

Heir Somnus in his silent hand
Held all my senses at command,
Quhyle I foryet my cair;
The mildest meid of mortall wichts
Quha pass in peace the private nichts,
That wauking finds it rare;
Sae in saft slumbers did I ly,
But not my wakryfe mynd,
Quhilk still stude watch, and couth espy
A man with aspeck kynd,
Richt auld lyke, and bauld lyke,
With baird thre quarters skant,
Sae braif lyke, and graif lyke,
He seemt to be a sanct.

Grit darring dartit frae his ee,
A braid-sword shogled at his thie,
On his left arm a targe;
A shynand speir fill'd his richt hand,
Of stalwart mak in bane and brawnd,
Of just proportions, large;
A various rainbow-colourt plaid
Owre his left spaul he threw:
Doun his braid back, frae his quhyt heid,
The silver wymplers grew.
Amaisit, I gaisit,
To se, led at command,
A stampant, and rampant,
Ferss lyon in his hand,

Quhilk held a thistle in his paw,
And round his collar graift I saw
This poesy pat and plain;
"*Nemo me impune lacess-*
Et:"—(in Scots) "Nane sall oppress
Me, unpunist with pain."
Still shaking, I durst naithing say,
Till he with kynd accent
Sayd, "Fere let nocht thy hairt affray,
I cum to heir thy plaint;
Thy graneing, and maneing,
Have laitlie reich'd myne eir,
Debar then, affar then,
All eiryness, or feir;

"For I am ane of a hie station,
The warden of this auntient nation,
And can nocht do thee wrang."
I vizyt him then round about,
Syne with a resolution stout,
Speird, quhair he had been sae lang?

Quod he, "Althocht I sum forsuke,
Becaus they did me slicht,
To hills and glens I me betuke,
To them that loves my richt;
Quhase mynds yet, inclynds yet,
To damm the rappid spate,
Devysing, and prysing,
Freidom at ony rate.

"Our trechour peirs thair tyranns treit,
Quha jyb them, and thair substance eit,
And on thair honour stamp;
They, pure degenerate! bend their baks,
The victor, Langshanks, proudly cracks
He has blawn out our lamp;
Quhyle trew men, sair complainand, tell,
With sobs, thair silent greif,
How Baliol their richts did sell,
With small howp of releife;
Regretand, and fretand,
Ay at his cursit plots,
Quha rammed, and crammed,
That bargin down thair throts.

"Braiv gentrie sweir, and burgers ban;
Revenge is muttert be ilk clan,
That 's to their nation trew;
The cloysters cum, to cun the evil,
Mailpayers wiss it to the devil,
With its contryving crew;
The hardy wald, with hairty wills,
Upon dyre vengance fall;
The feckless fret owre heuchs and hills,
And eccho answers all;

Repetand, and greitand,
With mony a sair alace!
For blasting, and casting,
Our honour in disgrace."

"Waes me!" quod I, "our case is bad,
And mony of us are gane mad,
Sen this disgraceful paction.
We are felld and herryt now by forse;
And hardly help fort,—that 's yit worse,—
We are sae forfairn with faction.
Then, has not he gude cause to grumble,
That 's forst to be a slaiv?
Oppression dois the judgment jumble,
And gars a wyse man raiv.
May cheins then, and pains then,
Infernal be thair hyre,
Quha dang us, and flang us,
Into this ugsum myre!"

Then he, with bauld forbidding luke,
And staitly air, did me rebuke,
For being of sprite sae mein.
Said he, "It 's far beneath a Scot
To use weak curses, quhen his lot
May sumtyms sour his splein;
He rather sould, mair lyke a man,
Some braiv design attempt;
Gif its nocht in his pith, what than,
Rest but a quhyle content,
Nocht feirful, but cheirful,
And wait the will of Fate,
Which mynds to, desygns to,
Renew your auntient state.

"I ken sum mair than ye do all
Of quhat sall afterwart befall,
In mair auspicious times.
For aften far abuve the mune,
We watching beings do convene,
Frae round eard's utmost climes;
Quhair ev'ry warden represents
Cleirly his nation's case,
Gif famyne, pest, or sword torments,
Or vilains hie in place,
Quha keip ay, and heip ay,
Up to themselves grit store,
By rundging, and spunging,
The leil laborious pure."

"Say, then," said I, "at your hie sate,
Lernt ye ocht of auld Scotland's fate,
Gif eir she 'el be hersell?"
With smyle celest, quod he, "I can;
But it 's nocht fit an mortal man
Should ken all I can tell.
But part to thee I may unfold,
And thou may saifly ken,
Quhen Scottish peirs slicht Saxon gold,
And turn trew heartit men;
Quhen knaivry, and slaivrie,
Ar equally dispysd,
And loyalte, and royaltie,
Universalie are prysd;

"Quhen all your trade is at a stand,
And cunyie clene forsaiks the land,
Quhilk will be very sune;
Will preists without their stypands preich?
For nocht will lawyers' causes streich?
Faith thatis nae easy done!

All this and mair maun cum to pass,
To cleir your glamourit sicht;
And Scotland maun be made an ass,
To set her jugment richt.
Theyil jade hir, and blad hir,
Untill she brak hir tether,
Thoch auld she 's, yit bauld she 's,
And teuch like barkit lether.

"But mony a corss sall braithless ly,
And wae sall mony a widow cry,
Or all rin richt again;
Owre Cheviot prancing proudly north,
The faes sall tak the field near Forth,
And think the day their ain;
But burns that day sall rin with blude
Of them that now oppress;
Thair carcasses be Corbys fude,
By thousands on the gress.
A king then, sall ring then,
Of wyse renoun and braiv,
Quhase *pusiens*, and *sapiens*,
Sall richt restore and saiv."

"The view of freidomis sweit," quod I.
"O say, grit tennant of the skye,
How neir 's that happie tyme?"
"We ken things but be circumstans;
Nae mair," quod he, "I may advance,
Leist I commit a cryme."
"Quhat eir ye pleis, gae on," quod I,
"I sall not fash ye more.
Say how, and quhair ye met, and quhy,
As ye did hint before?"

With air then, sae fair then,
That glanst like rayis of glory,
Sae godlyk, and oddlyk,
He thus resumit his story.

"Frae the sun's rysing to his sett,
All the pryme rait of wardens met,
In solemn bricht array,
With vehicles of aither cleir,
Sic we put on quhen we appeir
To sauls rowit up in clay;
Thair in a wyde and splendit hall,
Reird up with shynand beims,
Quhais rufe-treis wer of rainbows all,
And paivt with starrie gleims,
Quhilk prinked, and twinkled,
Brichtly beyont compair,
Much famed, and named,
A castill in the air.

"In midst of quhilk a tabill stude,
A spacious oval reid as blude,
Made of a fyre-flaucht;
Arround the dazling walls were drawn,
With rays, be a celestial haun,
Full mony a curious draucht.
Inferiour beings flew in haist,
Without gyd or derectour,
Millions of myles throch the wyld waste,
To bring in bowlis of nectar:
Then roundly, and soundly,
We drank lyk Roman gods,
Quhen Jove sae, dois rove sae,
That Mars and Bacchus nods.

"Quhen Phebus heid turns licht as cork,
And Neptune leans upon his fork,
And limpand Vulcan blethers;
Quhen Pluto glowrs as he were wyld,
And Cupid (Luve's we wingit chyld)
Fals down and fyels his fethers;
Quhen Pan foryets to tune his reid,
And flings it cairless bye;
And Hermes, wing'd at heils and heid,
Can nowther stand nor lye:
Quhen staggirrand, and swaggirrand,
They stoyter hame to sleip,
Quhyle centeries, at enteries,
Imortal watches keip.

"Thus we tuke in the high brown liquour,
And bangd about the nectar biquour,
But evir with this ods:
We neir in drink our judgments drench,
Nor scour about to seik a wench,
Lyk these auld baudy gods;
But franklie at ilk uther ask,
Quhats proper we suld know,
How ilk ane hes performt the task
Assignd to him below.
Our minds then, sae kind then,
Are fixt upon our care,
Ay noting, and ploting,
Quhat tends to thair weilfare.

"Gothus and Vandall baith lukt bluff,
Quhyle Gallus sneerd and tuke a snuff,
Quhilk made Allmane to stare;
Latinus bad him naithing feir,
But lend his hand to haly weir,
And of cowd crouns tak care;

Batavius, with his paddock-face,
Luking asquint, cryd pisch!
Your monks ar void of sence or grace,
I had lure ficht for fisch;
Your schule-men ar fule-men,
Carvit out for dull debates,
Decoying, and destroying,
Baith monarchies and states.

"Iberius, with a gurlie nod,
Cryd, Hogan, yes we ken your god,
Its herrings ye adore;
Heptarchus, as he usd to be,
Can nocht with his ain thochts agre,
But varies bak and fore;
Ane quhyle he says, It is not richt
A monarch to resist,
Neist braith all ryall powir will slicht,
And passive homage jest;
He hitches, and fitches,
Betwein the *hic*, and *hoc*,
Ay jieand, and flieand,
Round lyk a wedder-cock.

"I still support my precedens
Abune them all for sword and sens,
Thoch I haiv layn richt now lown;
Quhylk was, becaus I bure a grudge
At sum fule Scotis, quha lykd to drudge
To princes no their own.
Sum thanes thair tennants pykt and squeist,
And purst up all thair rent,
Syne wallopt to far courts, and bleist,
Till riggs and shaws war spent;

Syne byndging, and whyndging,
Quhen thus redust to howps,
They dander, and wander,
About pure lickmadowps.

"But now its tyme for me to draw
My shynand sword against club-law,
And gar my lyon rore;
He sall or lang gie sic a sound,
The echo sall be hard around
Europe frae shore to shore.
Then lat them gadder all their strenth,
And stryve to wirk my fall,
Tho' numerous, yit at the lenth
I will owrecum them all;
And raise yit and blase yit,
My braivrie, and renown,
By gracing, and placing,
Aright the Scottis crown.

"Quhen my braiv Bruce the same sall weir
Upon his ryal heid, full cleir
The diadem will shyne;
Then sall your sair oppression ceise,
His intrest yours he will not fleice,
Or leiv you eir inclyne.
Thoch millions to his purse be lent,
Yell neir the puirer be,
But rather richer, quhyle its spent
Within the Scottish se:
The field then, sall yeild then,
To honest husbands' welth,
Gude laws then, sall cause then,
A sickly state haiv helth."

Quhyle thus he talkt, methocht ther came
A wondir fair etherial dame,
And to our warden sayd:
"Gret Callidon, I cum in serch
Of you, frae the hych starry arch,
The counsill wants your ayd;
Frae every quarter of the sky,
As swift as quhirl-wynd,
With spirits speid the chiftains hy,
Sum gret thing is desygnd.
Owre muntains, be funtains,
And round ilk fairy ring,
I haif chaist ze; O haist ze,
They talk about your king!"

With that my hand methocht he shuke,
And wischt I happyness micht bruke,
To eild be nicht and day;
Syne quicker than an arrow's flicht,
He mountit upwarts frae my sicht,
Straicht to the Milkie way.
My mynd him followit throw the skyes,
Untill the brynie streme
For joy ran trickling frae myne eyes,
And wakit me frae dreme:
Then peiping, half-sleiping,
Frae furth my rural beild,
It eisit me, and pleisit me,
To se and smell the feild.

For Flora in hir clene array,
New washen with a showir of May,
Lukit full sweit and fair;
Quhyle hir cleir husband frae abuve
Shed down his rayis of genial luve,
Hir sweits perfumt the air;

The winds war husht, the welkin cleird,
The glumand clouds war fled,
And all as saft and gay appeird
As ane Elysion shed;
Quhilk heisit, and bleisit,
My heart with sic a fyre,
As raises these praises,
That do to Heaven aspyre.

AN ODE.

ALLAN RAMSAY TO HIS SON,

ON HIS PAINTING CAPTAIN JAMES FORESTER. (1)

Young painter, thy attempt is fair;
And may'st thou finish, with a grace,
The happy smile, unmixt with care,
That ever shines in For'ster's face.

So far thy labour, well-design'd,
May all the outward form display;
But pencils cannot paint the mind;
In this to me thou must give way.

With glowing colours thou canst show
Th' embroider'd coat, and nice toupee;
Draw him a first-rate blazing beau,
Easy and airy, gay and free.

But I can place him in a light,
That will his higher merits hit;

(1) Who was afterwards Colonel Forester, and known in the literary world as the author of an elegant tract, entitled, 'The Polite Philosopher;' the purpose of which is to show, that no bad man can be truly polite.

Display what makes him much more bright,
His courage, learning, and his wit;

His sprightly humour, solid sense,
And—But here further 'tis not meet
I should his noted worth advance,
Lest I be deem'd a parasite.

Yet, this let little would-be's know,
That are but apes of so much fire,
'Tis the philosopher, not beau,
Whom we deservedly admire.

Trifle (why not?) with clothes and air,
Sing, dance, and joke, whene'er ye please;
These oft our joy and health repair,
Acceptable, perform'd with ease.

True, art and nature must combine,
To combat human cares so rife;
And rarely characters can shine
So fair as Forester's in life.

ELEGIAC POEMS.

[* It is one of the evils of collective editions that they must often contain pieces which can add neither to the author's reputation nor to the amusement or edification of the reader. And certainly Ramsay has written nothing less capable of repaying the general reader for the time which the perusal demands than the poems which his careful editor has here arranged under the head 'Elegiac.' Sentiment and diction are alike preposterous in these stupid verses; and their perusal only fills us with astonishment at the taste of the generation which could encourage such effusions or digest such compliments. In the Comic Elegy, Ramsay's genius wrought freely, and therefore successfully; but when he would be more than usually solemn and impressive, we have only what Coleridge describes as "the startling hysteric of weakness over-exerting itself."]

ELEGIAC POEMS.

1728.

AN ODE

TO THE MEMORY OF LADY MARGARET ANSTRUTHER.

All in her bloom, the graceful fair,
Lucinda, leaves this mortal round:
Her loss a thousand mourners share,
And Beauty feels the cruel wound.
Now grief and tears o'er all our joys prevail,
Viewing her rosy cheeks all cold and pale.

Thus some fair star distinguish'd bright,
Which decks the heavens, and guides the main,—
When clouds obscure its glorious light,
It leaves the gloomy world in pain:
So sudden death has veil'd Lucinda's eyes,
And left us lost in darkness and surprise.

Nor sweetness, beauty, youth, nor wealth,—
Nor blood, tho' nobly high it springs,
Nor virtue's self, can purchase health,
When Death severe his summons brings;
Else might the fair Lucinda, young and gay,
Have blest the world with a much longer stay.

But say, sweet shade, was it thy choice
To leave this low inconstant globe;
Tir'd with its vain, its jangling noise,
Thou wisely dropt thy human robe?
Or tell us, guardian-angels, tell us true,
Did ye not claim her hence as one of you?

Yes, well we know it is your way,
When here below such beings shine,
To grudge us e'en our earthly clay,
Which form'd like her, becomes divine:
Such you demand, and free from cares and fears,
Unmindful of our fruitless sighs and tears!

Yet deign, ye friends to human kind,
The lonely consort to attend;
O sooth the anguish of his mind,
And let his killing sorrows end!
Tell him, his sighs and mourning to assuage,
Each day she dwelt with him was worth an age.

Ye lovely virgins who excel,
Ye fair to whom such strains belong,
In melting notes her beauties tell,
And weep her virtues in a song:
See that ye place her merit in true light,
For singing her's your own will shine more bright.

Let east, and west, and south, and north,
Aloud the mournful music hear,
How Beauty 's fallen beyond the Forth!
Let Britain's genius cypress wear!
Yet Britain 's happy, who such beauty yields
As forc'd from her's will grace Elysium's fields.

AN ELEGY

ON JAMES, LORD CARNEGIE.

As poets feign, and painters draw
Love and the Paphian bride,
Sae we the fair Southeska saw,
Carnegie by her side.

Now sever'd frae his sweets by death,
Her grief wha can express?
What muse can tell the waefu' skaith,
Or mother's deep distress?

Sae roses wither in their buds,
Kill'd by an eastern blast;
And sweetest dawns, in May, with clouds
And storms are soon o'ercast.

Ah, chequer'd life!—Ae day gives joy;
The niest our hearts maun bleed.
Heaven caus'd a seraph turn a boy;
Now gars us trow he 's dead.

Wha can reflect on 's ilka grace,
The sweetness of his tongue,
His manly looks, his lovely face,
And judgment ripe sae young,

And yet forbear to make a doubt,
As did the royal swain,
When he with grief of heart cried out,
That "Man was made in vain!"

Mortals the ways of providence
But very scrimply scan;
The changing scene eludes the sense
And reasonings of man.

How many thousands ilka year,
Of hopefu' children crave
Our love and care, then disappear,
To glut a gaping grave!

What is this grave?—A wardrobe poor,
Which hads our rotting duds:
Th' immortal mind, serene and pure,
Is claith'd aboon the clouds.

Then cease to grieve, dejected fair,
You had him but in trust;
He was your beauteous son, your heir,
Yet still ae half was dust;

The other to its native skies
Now wings its happy way;
With glorious speed and joy he flies,
There blissfully to stray.

Carnegie then but changes clay
For fair celestial rays;
He mounts up to eternal day,
And, as he parts, he says,

"Adieu, Mamma, forget my tender fate!
These rushing tears are vain, they flow too late."
This said, he hasted hence with pleasing joy;
I saw the gods embrace their darling boy.

1728.

AN ODE

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF ANNE, LADY GARLIES.

How vain are our attempts to know!
How poor, alas, is reason's skill!
We blindly wander here below,
Yet fondly search Heaven's secret will!
Each day we see the young, the great, the small,
The good, the bad, without distinction fall.

Yet such as have the rest out-shin'd,
We should be faulty to neglect;
Each grace of beauteous Garlia's mind
Deserves the muse's high respect.
But how can she such worth and goodness paint—
A loving daughter, virtuous wife, and saint?

Some seraph, who in endless day
With themes sublime employs the lyre,
Dart in my breast a shining ray,
And all my soul with her inspire:
Else sing yourselves so fair a frame and mind,
As now supplies a place among your kind.

As we the glorious sun admire,
Whose beams make ev'ry joy arise,
Yet dare not view the dazzling fire,
Without much hazarding our eyes,—
So did her beauties ev'ry heart allure,
While her bright virtues kill'd each thought impure.

She breath'd more sweetness than the East,
While ev'ry sentence was divine;

Her smiles could calm each jarring breast;
Her soul was a celestial mine,
Where all the precious veins of virtue lay;
Too vast a treasure long to lodge in clay?

Tho' sprung from an heroic race, (1)
Which from the world respect does claim,
Yet wanted she no borrow'd grace,
Her own demands immortal fame:
Worthy as those who shun the vulgar roads,
Start from the crowd, and rise among the gods.

Such pains as weaker minds possess,
Could in her breast no access find;
But lowly meekness did confess
A steady and superior mind:
Unmov'd she bore those honours due the great,
Nor could have been depress'd with a more humble fate.

As to the fields the huntsman hies,
With joyful shouts he wakes the morn;
While nature smiles, serene the skies,
Swift fly his hounds, shrill blows his horn:
When suddenly the thund'ring cloud pours rain,
Defaces day, and drives him from the plain.

Thus young Brigantius' circling arms
Grasp'd all that 's lovely to his heart,
Rejoic'd o'er his dear Anna's charms,
But not expecting soon to part;
When rigid fate, for reasons known above,
Snatch'd from his breast the object of his love.

(1) She was daughter of the earl-marshal of Scotland.

Ah, Garlies! once the happiest man,
Than e'er before Brigantine chief,
Now sever'd from your lovely Anne,
'Tis hard indeed to stem your grief!
Yet mind what you might often from her hear—
What Heaven designs submissive we should bear.

Oh! ne'er forget that tender care,
Those heaven-born thoughts she did employ,
To point those ways how you may share
Above with her immortal joy:
Such a bright pattern of what 's good and great,
Even angels need not blush to imitate.

1722.

TO SIR JOHN CLERK;

ON THE DEATH OF HIS SON, JOHN CLERK, ESQ.

If tears can ever be a duty found,
'Tis when the death of dear relations wound;
Then you must weep, you have too just a ground.

A son whom all the good and wise admir'd,
Shining with ev'ry grace to be desir'd,
Rais'd high your joyful hopes—and then retir'd.

Nature must yield, when such a weighty load
Rouses the passions, and makes reason nod!
But who may contradict the will of God?

By his great Author, man was sent below,
Some things to learn, great pains to undergo,
To fit him for what further he 's to know.

This end obtain'd, without regarding time,
He calls the soul home to its native clime,
To happiness and knowledge more sublime.

Thus some in youth, like eagles, mount the steep
Which leads to man, and fathom learning's deep;
Others thro' age with reptile motion creep;

Like lazy streams, which fill the fenny strand,
In muddy pools they long inactive stand,
Till spent in vapour, or immers'd in sand.

But down its flinty channel, without stain,
The mountain-rill flows eagerly to gain,
With a full tide, its origin, the main.

Thus your lov'd youth, whose bright aspiring mind
Could not to lazy minutes be confin'd,
Sail'd down the stream of life before the wind.

Perform'd the task of man so well, so soon,
He reach'd the sea of bliss before his noon,
And to his memory lasting laurels won.

When life's tempestuous billows ceas'd to roar,
And ere his broken vessel was no more,
His soul serenely view'd the heav'nly shore;

Bravely resign'd obeying fate's command,
He fix'd his eyes on the immortal land,
Where crowding seraphs reach'd him out the hand,

Southeska, (1) smiling cherub, first appear'd,
With Garlies' consort, (2) who vast pleasures shar'd,
Conducting him where virtue finds reward.

Think in the world of sp'rits, with how much joy
His tender mother would receive her boy,
Where fate no more their union can destroy.

His good grandsire, who lately went to rest,
How fondly would he grasp him to his breast,
And welcome him to regions of the blest!

From us, 't is true, his youthful sweets are gone,
Which may plead for our weakness, when we moan:
The loss indeed is ours, he can have none.

Thus sailors with a crazy vessel crost,
Expecting every minute to be lost,
With weeping eyes behold a sunny coast,

Where happy land-men safely breathe the air,
Bask in the sun, or to cool shades repair,
They longing sigh, and wish themselves were there.

But who would after death to bliss lay claim,
Must, like your son, each vicious passion tame,
Fly from the crowd, and at perfection aim.

Then grieve no more, nor vex yourself in vain;
To latest age the character maintain
You now possess, you'll find your son again.

(1) James, Lord Carnegie; see p. 257.
(2) Lady Garlies; see p. 259;—both his near relations.

AN ELEGY

ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT ALEXANDER, OF BLACKHOUSE.

Thou sable-border'd sheet, begone!
Harbour to thee I must refuse,
Sure thou canst welcome find from none,
Who carriest such ungrateful news.

Who can attend thy mournful tale,
And ward his soul from piercing woe?
In viewing thee, grief must prevail,
And tears from gushing eyes o'erflow;

From eyes of all that knew the man,
And in his friendship had a share,
Who all the world's affections won,
By virtues that all nat'ral were.

His merits dazzle, while we view;
His goodness is a theme so full,
The Muse wants strength to pay what 's due,
While estimation prompts the will.

But she endeavours to make known
To farthest down posterity,
That good Blackhouse was such an one,
As every one should wish to be.

AN INSCRIPTION

ON THE TOMB OF ALEXANDER WARDLAW.

Here lies a man, whose upright heart
With virtue was profusely stor'd;
Who acted well the honest part
Between the tenants and their lord.

Between the sand and flinty rock
Thus steer'd he in the golden mean,
While his blythe countenance bespoke
A mind unruffled and serene.

As to great Bruce the Flemings prov'd
Faithful, so to the Flemings' heir
Wardlaw behav'd, and was belov'd
For 's justice, candour, faith, and care.

His merit shall preserve his fame
To latest ages, free from rust,
Till the archangel raise his frame
To join his soul amongst the just.

AN ODE

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF

ANNE, DUCHESS OF HAMILTON.

Why sounds the plain with sad complaint?
Why hides the sun his beams?
Why sighs the wind sae black and cauld?
Why mourn the swelling streams?

Wail on, ye heights! ye glens, complain!
Sun, wear thy cloudy veil!
Sigh, winds, frae frozen caves of snaw!
Clyde, mourn the rueful tale!

She's dead!—the beauteous Anna's dead!—
All nature wears a gloom.
Alas! the comely budding flower
Is faded in the bloom.

Clos'd in the weeping marble vault,
Now cauld and blae she lies;
Nae mair the smiles adorn her cheek,
Nae mair she lifts her eyes.

Too soon, O sweetest, fairest, best,
Young parent, lovely mate,
Thou leaves thy lord and infant-son,
To weep thy early fate!

But late thy cheerfu' marriage-day
Gave gladness all around;
But late in thee the youthful chief
A heaven of blessings found.

His bosom swells, for much he lov'd;
Words fail to paint his grief;
He starts in dreams, and grasps thy shade;
The day brings nae relief.

The fair illusion skims away,
And grief again returns;
Life's pleasures make a vain attempt,
Disconsolate he mourns.

He mourns his loss, a nation's loss,
It claims a flood of tears,
When sic a lov'd illustrious star
Sae quickly disappears.

With roses and the lily buds,
Ye nymphs her grave adorn,
And weeping tell—thus sweet she was,
Thus early from us torn.

To silent twilight shades retire,
Ye melancholy swains,
In melting notes repeat her praise.
In sighing vent your pains.

But haste, calm reason to our aid,
And paining thoughts subdue,
By placing of the pious Fair
In a mair pleasing view:

Whose white immortal mind now shines,
And shall for ever, bright,
Above th' insult of death and pain,
By the first spring of Light.

There joins the high melodious thrang,
That strike eternal strings:
In presence of Omnipotence
She now a seraph sings.

Then cease, great James, thy flowing tears,
Nor rent thy soul in vain;
Frae bowers of bliss she 'll ne'er return
To thy kind arms again.

With goodness still adorn thy mind,
True greatness still improve;
Be still a patriot just and brave,
And meet thy saint above.

AN ODE

TO THE MEMORY OF SIR ISAAC NEWTON.

Great Newton's dead!—Full ripe his fame!
Cease vulgar grief to cloud our song:
We thank the Author of our frame,
Who lent him to the earth so long.

The godlike man now mounts the sky,
Exploring all yon radiant spheres;
And with one view can more descry,
Than here below in eighty years:

Though none with greater strength of soul
Could rise to more divine a height,
Or range the orbs from pole to pole,
And more improve the human sight.

Now with full joy he can survey
These worlds, and ev'ry shining blaze,
That countless in the milky way
Only through glasses show their rays.

Thousands in thousand arts excell'd,
But often to one part confin'd:
While ev'ry science stood reveal'd
And clear to his capacious mind.

His penetration, most profound,
Launch'd far in that extended sea,
Where human minds can reach no bound,
And never dived so deep as he.

Sons of the east and western world,
When on this leading star ye gaze,
While magnets guide the sail unfurl'd,
Pay to his memory due praise.

Through ev'ry maze he was the guide;
While others crawl'd, he soar'd above;
Yet modesty, unstain'd with pride,
Increas'd his merit, and our love.

He shunn'd the sophistry of words,
Which only hatch contentious spite;
His learning turn'd on what affords
By demonstration most delight.

Britain may honourably boast,
And glory in her matchless son,
Whose genius has invented most,
And finish'd what the rest begun.

Ye Fellows of the Royal Class,
Who honour'd him to be your head,
Erect in finest stone and brass
Statues of the illustrious dead:

Although more lasting than them all,
Or e'en the poet's highest strain,
His works, as long as wheels this ball,
Shall his great memory sustain.

May from your learned band arise
Newtons to shine through future times,
And bring down knowledge from the skies,
To plant on wild barbarian climes.

Till nations, few degrees from brutes,
Be brought into each proper road,
Which leads to wisdom's happiest fruits,
To know their Saviour and their God.

1728.

AN ODE

TO THE MEMORY OF MRS. FORBES OF NEWHALL.

Ah, life! thou short uncertain blaze,
Scarce worthy to be wish'd or lov'd,
When by strict death so many ways,
So soon the sweetest are remov'd!

In prime of life and lovely glow,
The dear Bucina must submit;
Nor could ward off the fatal blow,
With every beauty, grace, and wit.

If outward charms, and temper sweet,
The cheerful smile, and thought sublime,
Could have preserv'd, she ne'er had met
A change till Death had sunk with Time.

Her soul glanc'd with each heavenly ray,
Her form with all those beauties fair
For which young brides and mothers pray,
And wish for to their infant care.

Sour spleen or anger, passion rude,
These opposites to peace and heaven,
Ne'er pal'd her cheek, nor fir'd her blood;
Her mind was ever calm and even.

Come, fairest nymphs, and gentle swains,
Give loose to tears of tender love;
Strew fragrant flowers on her remains,
While sighing round her grave you move.

In mournful notes your pain express,
While with reflection you run o'er,
How excellent, how good she was:—
She was, alas!—but is no more!

Yet piously correct your moan,
And raise religious thoughts on high,
After her spotless soul, that's gone
To joys that ne'er can fade or die.

COMIC POEMS.

COMIC POEMS.

1721.(1)

THE MORNING INTERVIEW.

Such killing looks, so thick the arrows fly,
That 'tis unsafe to be a stander by:
Poets approaching to describe the fight,
Are by their wounds instructed how to write.

WALLER.

When silent show'rs refresh the fragrant soil,
And tender salads eat with tuscan oil;
Harmonious music gladdens every grove,
While bleating lambkins from their parents rove,
And o'er the plain the anxious mothers stray,
Calling their tender care with hoarser bae;
Now cheerful Zephyr from the western skies
With easy flight o'er painted meadows flies,
To kiss his Flora with a gentle air,
Who yields to his embrace, and looks more fair:
When from debauch, with sp'ritous juice opprest,
The sons of Bacchus stagger home to rest,
With tatter'd wigs, foul shoes, and uncock'd hats,
And all debauch'd with snuff their loose cravats.

(1) [* This date is certainly erroneous. An 8vo edition of 'The Morning Interview,' bearing to be the second, has the date 1719 appended to it. 'The Rape of the Lock' was published in 1712; and Ramsay's imitative faculty is here awakened into activity by the ambitious design to produce a companion-piece to Pope's delicately finished poem. See Tytler's Remarks, p. 55, *ante*.]

The sun began to sip the morning dew,
As Damon from his restless pillow flew.
Him late from Celia's cheek a patch did wound,
A patch high seated on the blushing round.
His painful thoughts all night forbid him rest,
And he employ'd that night as one opprest;
Musing revenge, and how to countermine
The strongest force, and ev'ry deep design
Of patches, fans, of necklaces and rings,
E'en music's pow'r when Celia plays or sings.
Fatigu'd with running errands all the day,
Happy in want of thought, his valet lay,
Recruiting strength with sleep.—His master calls,
He starts with lock'd-up eyes, and beats the walls.
A second thunder rouses up the sot,
He yawns, and murmurs curses through his throat:
Stockings awry, and breeches' knees unlac'd,
And buttons do mistake their holes for haste.
His master raves; cries, "Roger, make dispatch!
Time flies apace!" He frown'd, and look'd his watch.
"Haste, do my wig! tie 't with the careless knots;
And run to Civet's, let him fill my box;
Go to my laundress, see what makes her stay;
And call a coach and barber in your way."
Thus orders justle orders in a throng:
Roger with laden mem'ry trots along.
His errands done, with brushes next he must
Renew his toil amidst presuming dust.
The yielding comb he leads with artful care
Through crook'd meanders of the flaxen hair:
Ere this perform'd, he 's almost choak'd to death,
The air is thicken'd, and he pants for breath.
The trav'ller thus, in the Numidian plains,
A conflict with the driving sands sustains.

Two hours are past, and Damon is equipt.
Pensive he stalks, and meditates the fight:
Arm'd cap-a-pée, in dress a killing beau,
Thrice view'd his glass, and thrice resolv'd to go,
Flush'd full of hope to overcome his foe.
His early pray'rs were all to Paphos sent,
That Jove's sea-daughter would give her consent;
Cry'd, "Send thy little son unto my aid."
Then took his hat, tripp'd out, and no more said.

What lofty thoughts do sometimes push a man
Beyond the verge of his own native span!
Keep low thy thoughts, frail clay, nor boast thy pow'r,
Fate will be fate; and since there's nothing sure,
Vex not thyself too much, but catch th' auspicious hour.
The tow'ring lark had thrice his matins sung,
And thrice were bells for pious service rung;
In plaids wrapp't up, prudes throng'd the sacred dome,
And leave the spacious petticoat at home;
While softest beams seal'd up fair Celia's eyes,
She dreams of Damon, and forgets to rise.
A sportive sylph contrives the subtle snare;
Sylphs know the charming baits which catch the fair.
She shows him handsome, brawny, rich, and young,
With snuff-box, cane, and sword-knot finely hung,
Well skill'd in airs of dangle, toss, and rap,—
Those graces which the tender hearts entrap.

Where Aulus oft makes law for justice pass,
And Charles's statue stands in lasting brass,
Amidst a lofty square (1) which strikes the sight,
With spacious fabrics of stupendous height,
Whose sublime roofs in clouds advance so high,
They seem the watch-tow'rs of the nether sky;
Where once, alas! where once the three estates
Of Scotland's parliament held free debates;

(1) [* The Parliament square in the Old town of Edinburgh.]

Here Celia dwelt; and here did Damon move,
Press'd by his rigid fate, and raging love.
To her apartment straight the daring swain
Approach'd, and softly knock'd, nor knock'd in vain.
The nymph, new-wak'd, starts from the lazy down,
And rolls her gentle limbs in morning-gown.
But half-awake, she judges it must be
Frankalia, come to take her morning tea:
Cries, "Welcome, cousin!"—but she soon began
To change her visage when she saw a man.
Her unfix'd eyes with various turnings range,
And pale surprise to modest red exchange.
Doubtful 'twixt modesty and love she stands;
Then ask'd the bold impertinent's demands.
Her strokes are doubled, and the youth now found
His pains increase, and open ev'ry wound.
Who can describe the charms of loose attire?
Who can resist the flames with which they fire?
"Ah, barbarous maid!" he cries; "sure native charms
Are too, too much; why then such store of arms?—
Madam, I come, prompt by th' uneasy pains
Caus'd by a wound from you, and want revenge:
A borrow'd power was posted on a charm,—
A patch—damn'd patch! can patches work such harm?"
He said, then threw a bomb, lay hid within
Love's mortar-piece, the dimple of his chin:
It miss'd for once. She lifted up her head,
And blush'd a smile that almost struck him dead;
Then cunningly retir'd, but he pursu'd
Near to the toilet, where the war renew'd.
Thus the great Fabius often gain'd the day
O'er Hannibal, by frequent giving way;
So warlike Bruce and Wallace sometimes deign'd
To seem defeat, yet certain conquest gain'd.

Thus was he laid in midst of Celia's room,
Speechless he stood, and waited for his doom:
Words were but vain, he scarce could use his breath,
As round he view'd the implements of death.
Here dreadful arms in careless heaps were laid
In gay disorder round her tumbled bed;
He often to the soft retreat would stare,
Still wishing he might give the battle there.
Stunn'd with the thought, his wand'ring looks did stray
To where lac'd shoes and her silk stockings lay,
And garters which are never seen by day.
His dazzled eyes almost deserted light,
No man before had ever got the sight.
A lady's garters!—Earth! their very name,
Tho' yet unseen, sets all the soul on flame.
The royal Ned (1) knew well their mighty charms,
Else he 'd ne'er hoop'd one round the English arms.
Let barb'rous honours crown the sword and lance,
Thou next their king does British knights advance,
O Garter!—"Honi soit qui mal y pense."

O, who can all these hidden turns relate,
That do attend on a rash lover's fate!
In deep distress the youth turn'd up his eyes,
As if to ask assistance from the skies.
The petticoat was hanging on a pin,
Which the unlucky swain star'd up within;
His curious eyes too daringly did rove,
Around this oval conic vault of love;
Himself alone can tell the pain he found,
While his wild sight survey'd forbidden ground.
He view'd the tenfold fence, and gave a groan,
His trembling limbs bespoke his courage gone;

(1) Edward III. king of England, who established the most honourable order of the Garter.

Stupid and pale he stood, like statue dumb,
The amber snuff dropt from his careless thumb.
Be silent here, my muse, and shun a plea,
May rise betwixt old Bickerstaff and me,
For none may touch a petticoat but he.
Damon thus foil'd, breath'd with a dying tone,
"Assist, ye pow'rs of love! else I am gone."
The ardent pray'r soon reach'd the Cyprian grove,
Heard and accepted by the queen of love.
Fate was propitious too; her son was by,
Who 'midst his dread artillery did lie
Of Flanders lace and straps of curious dye.
On India muslin shades the god did loll,
His head reclin'd upon a tinsy roll.
The mother-goddess thus her son bespoke:
"Thou must, my boy, assume the shape of Shock,
And leap to Celia's lap, whence thou may slip
Thy paw up to her breast, and reach her lip;
Strike deep thy charms, thy pow'rful art display,
To make young Damon conqueror to-day,
Thou need not blush to change thy shape, since Jove
Try'd most of brutal forms to gain his love;
Who, that he might his loud Saturnia gull,
For fair Europa's sake inform'd a bull."
She spoke: Not quicker does the lamp of day
Dart on the mountain-tops a gilded ray,
Swifter than lightning flies before the clap,
From Cyprus' isle he reached Celia's lap;
Now fawns, now wags his tail, and licks her arm;
She hugs him to her breast, nor dreads the harm.
So in Ascanius' shape, the god unseen,
Of old deceiv'd the Carthaginian queen.
So now the subtle Pow'r his time espies,
And threw two barbed darts in Celia's eyes;

Many were broke before he could succeed;
But that of gold flew whizzing thro' her head.
These were his last reserve: when others fail,
Then the refulgent metal must prevail.
Pleasure produc'd by money now appears,
Coaches and six run rattling in her ears.
O liv'rymen! attendants! household plate!
Court-posts and visits! pompous air and state!
How can your splendour easy access find,
And gently captivate the fair-one's mind?
Success attends, Cupid has play'd his part,
And sunk the pow'rful venom to her heart.
She could no more, she 's catched in the snare,
Sighing she fainted in an easy chair.
No more the sanguine streams in blushes glow,
But to support the heart all inward flow,
Leaving the cheek as cold and white as snow.
Thus Celia fell, or rather thus did rise;
Thus Damon made, or else was made a prize;
For both were conquerors, and both did yield;
First she, now he is master of the field.

Now he resumes fresh life, abandons fear,
Jumps to his limbs, and does more gay appear.
Not gaming heir, when his rich parent dies;
Not zealot reading Hackney's party-lies;
Not soft fifteen on her feet-washing night;
Not poet when his muse sublimes her flight;
Not an old maid for some young beauty's fall;
Not the long 'tending stibler, (1) at his call;
Not husbandmen in drought when rain descends;
Not miss when Limberham (2) his purse extends,—
E'er knew such raptures as this joyful swain,
When yielding dying Celia calm'd his pain.

(1) A probationer. (2) A kind keeper.

The rapid joys now in such torrents roll,
That scarce his organs can retain his soul.
Victor, he 's gen'rous, courts the fair's esteem,
And takes a bason fill'd with limpid stream,
Then from his fingers form'd an artful rain,
Which rous'd the dormant spirits of her brain,
And made the purple channels flow again.
'She lives!' he sings; she smiles and looks more tame!
Now peace and friendship is the only theme.
The muse owns freely here, she does not know
If language pass'd between the belle and beau,
Or if in courtship such use words (1) or no.
But sure it is, there was a parley beat,
And mutual love finish'd the proud debate.
Then to complete the peace and seal the bliss,
He for a diamond ring receiv'd a kiss
Of her soft hand; next the aspiring youth
With eager transports press'd her glowing mouth.
So by degrees the eagles teach their young
To mount on high, and stare upon the sun.
A sumptuous entertainment crowns the war,
And all rich requisites are brought from far.
The table boasts its being from Japan,
Th' ingenious work of some great artisan.
China, where potters coarsest mould refine
That rays thro' the transparent vessels shine;
The costly plates and dishes are from thence,
And Amazonia (2) must her sweets dispense;
To her warm banks our vessels cut the main,
For the sweet product of her luscious cane.

(1) It being alleged that the eloquence of this species lies in the elegance of dress.

(2) A famous river in South America, whence we have our sugar.

Here Scotia does no costly tribute bring,
Only some kettles full of Todian spring. (1)
Where Indus and the double Ganges flow,
On odorif'rous plains the leaves do grow,
Chief of the treat, a plant the boast of fame,
Sometimes call'd green, bohea 's its greater name.
O happiest of herbs! who would not be
Pythagoriz'd into the form of thee,
And with high transports act the part of tea!
Kisses on thee the haughty belles bestow,
While in thy steams their coral lips do glow;
Thy virtues and thy flavour they commend,
While men, even beaux, with parched lips attend.

EPILOGUE.

The curtain 's drawn: Now gen'rous reader, say,
Have you not read worse numbers in a play?
Sure here is plot, place, character, and time,
All smoothly wrought in good firm British rhyme.
I own 'tis but a sample of my lays,
Which asks the civil sanction of your praise;
Bestow 't with freedom, let your praise be ample,
And I myself will show you good example.
Keep up your face: altho' dull critics squint,
And cry, with empty nod, "There 's nothing in 't!"
They only mean there 's nothing they can use,
Because they find most where there 's most refuse.

(1) Tod's well, which supplies the city with water.

THE THIMBLE. (1)

What god shall I invoke to raise my song?
What goddess I of the celestial throng?
Shall bright Apollo lend to me his aid?
Shall chaste Lucina bring my muse to bed?
Oh! rather, greatest beauty of the sky,
I write for Lydia; hear your vot'ry's cry!
You gave your charms to her—what can you then deny?
All o'er this globe, where Phœbus darts his rays,
What strange variety accosts our eyes!
We see how nations variously incline,
How different studies favour different men.
Some love to chase the fox throughout the day,
Others to dance the winter night away;
Unlike to these, some love the trumpet's sound,
And cries of men, when gasping on the ground;
To some, of fancy warm, it gives delight,
Instructed by the muses, verse to write
Of bards, some generals in fight rehearse;
Others with groves and fountains crowd their verse,
Greater than theirs has fallen to my share—
A theme sublimer far demands my care;
I sing the Thimble—armour of the fair.
Hail! heaven-invented engine! gift divine!
You keep the tend'rest fingers free from pain.
Sing, lofty Muse, from whence the thimble sprung—
The thimble—safeguard of the fair and young.
In ancient times, ere mortals learnt the trade,
Bright Venus for herself her mantles made.

(1) [* Not formerly printed in any edition of Ramsay's works. It is here given from a privately printed sheet stuck into a copy of Chalmers's edition of Ramsay, which was formerly the property of Harry Guthrie, Esq. W. S. Edinburgh, and is now in possession of Mr. R. Chambers. Of its authenticity there is no room for doubt."—*Chambers's edition of Ramsay's Poems.*]

As busied once in Cyprian grove she sat,
Her turtles fondly sleeping at her feet,
With hands alone to sew the goddess tried,
Her wand'ring thoughts were otherwise employ'd;
When lo! her needle—strange effect of spite—
Wounded that skin it could not see so bright:
She starts—she raves—she trembles with the smart;
The point that prick'd her skin went to her heart.
Sharp pain would not allow her long to stop;
"My doves," she cried, "haste to Olympus' top!"
The tim'rous beauty gets into her car—
Her pinion'd bearers swiftly cut the air.
As quick as thought they reach'd the sacred ground,
Where mighty Jove with Juno sat enthron'd.
"What ails my child?" to her then cried the god;
"Why thus in tears? What makes you look so odd?
Would you a favour beg?" A while she stood,
Her ivory finger stain'd with purple blood;
Then thus:—"Oh! father of the gods," she pray'd,
"Grant I may be invulnerable made!"
With look sedate, returned the awful sire—
"Daughter, you do not know what you desire;
Would you to Pluto's gloomy regions run?
Would you be dipt in Styx, like Thetis' son?
Could you unfrighted view hell's dismal shore?
What shall I say then? Go, and stitch no more."
Ashamed—unsatisfied—away she hies
To try her fate again beneath the skies.
"Shall I," she said, "While goddesses well drest,
Outshine each other at a birth-day feast—
Shall I in simple nakedness be brought,
Or clothed in rags? Intolerable thought!
No! rather may the blood my cheeks forsake,
And a new passage through my fingers take!"

In fertile Sicily, well known to fame,
A mountain stands, and Ætna is its name.
Tremendous earthquakes rend the flinty rock,
And vomit forth continual fire and smoke:
Here Vulcan forges thunderbolts for Jove—
Here frames sharp arrows for the god of love;
His Cyclops with their hammers strike around—
The hollow caverns echo back the sound.

Here Venus brought her pigeons and her coach—
The one-eyed workmen ceased at her approach;
When Vulcan thus:—"My charmer! why so pale?
You seem prepared to tell some dismal tale.
Does fierce Tydides still his rage pursue?
Or has your son his arrows tried on you?"
"Ah no!" "What makes you bleed then? answer quick."
"Oh no! my lord, my husband! Know, a prick
Of needle's point has made me wondrous sick."
"Fear not, my spouse!" said Vulcan, "ne'er again,
Never shall any needle give you pain."
With that the charming goddess he embraced,
Then in a shell of brass her finger cased.
"This little engine shall in future days,"
Continued he, "receive the poets' praise,
And give a fruitful subject for their lays;
This shall the lovely Lydia's finger grace—
Lydia, the fairest of the human race!"
He spoke—then, with a smile, the Queen of Love
Return'd him thanks, and back to Cyprus drove.

When Venus Lydia with beauty blest,
She granted her the thimble with the rest;
Yet cannot brass or steel remain for aye—
All earthly things are subject to decay.
Of Babel's tow'r, so lofty and so proud,
No stone remains to tell us where it stood;

The great, the wise, the valiant, and the just,
Cæsar and Cato, are return'd to dust;
Devouring time to all destruction brings,
Alike the fate of thimbles—and of kings.
Then grieve not, Lydia! cease your anxious care,
Nor murmur lest your favourite thimble wear.
All other thimbles shall wear out ere long,
All other thimbles, be they e'er so strong,
Whilst yours shall live for ever—in my song.

1713.

AN ELEGY

ON MAGGY JOHNSTOUN,

Who died in the year 1711. (1)

Auld Reeky, (2) mourn in sable hue!
Let fouth of tears dreep like May-dew!
To braw tippony (3) bid adieu,
Which we with greed
Bended as fast as she could brew:—
But ah! she 's dead.

(1) Maggy Johnstoun lived about a mile southward of Edinburgh, kept a little farm, and had a particular art of brewing a small sort of ale, agreeable to the taste, very white, clear, and intoxicating; which made people who loved to have a good pennyworth for their money, be her frequent customers. And many others of every station, sometimes for diversion, thought it no impropriety to be seen in her barn or yard. [* See Tytler's Remarks, page 55, *ante*.]

(2) A name the country-people give Edinburgh, from the cloud of smoke or reek that is always impending over it.

(3) She sold the Scots pint—which is near two quarts English—for twopence.

To tell the truth now, Maggy dang,(1)
Of customers she had a bang;
For lairds and souters a' did gang
To drink bedeen;
The barn and yard was aft sae thrang,
We took the green;

And there by dizens we lay down,
Syne sweetly ca'd the healths around,
To bonny lasses black or brown,
As we loo'd best;
In bumpers we dull cares did drown,
And took our rest.

When in our pouch we found some clinks,
And took a turn o'er Bruntsfield links,(2)
Aften in Maggy's, at hy-jinks,(3)
We guzzled scuds,
Till we could scarce, wi' hale-out drinks,
Cast off our duds.

(1) *He dings*, or *dang*, is a phrase which means to excel or get the better.

(2) The fields between Edinburgh and Maggy's, where the citizens commonly play at the golf.

(3) A drunken game, or new project to drink and be rich, thus: The queff or cup is filled to the brim, then one of the company takes a pair of dice, and after crying *hy-jinks*, he throws them out. The number he casts up points out the person that must drink; he who threw beginning with himself number one, and so round till the number of the person agree with that of the dice (which may fall upon himself if the number be within twelve); then he sets the dice to him or bids him take them. He on whom they fall is obliged to drink, or pay a small forfeiture in money; then throws, and so on: but if he forgets to cry *hy-jinks*, he pays a forfeiture into the bank. Now he on whom it falls to drink, if there be any thing in bank worth drawing, gets all if he drinks; then with a great deal of caution he empties his cup, sweeps up the money, and orders the cup to be filled again, and then throws: for if he err in the articles, he loses the privilege of drawing the money. The articles are, 1. drink; 2. draw; 3. fill; 4. cry hy-jinks; 5. count just; 6. choose your doublet-man; viz., when two equal numbers of the dice are thrown, the person whom you choose must pay a double of the common forfeiture, and so must you when the dice are in his hand. A rare project this! and no bubble I can assure you; for a covetous fellow may save money, and get himself as drunk as he can desire in less than an hour's time.

We drank, and drew, and fill'd again;
O wow! but we were blythe and fain!
When ony had their count mistain,
O it was nice
To hear us a' cry, "Pike ye'r bain!(1)
And spell ye'r dice!"

Fou closs we us'd to drink and rant,
Until we baith did glow'r and gaunt,
And pish and spew, and yesk and maunt,
Right swash I true;
Then of auld stories we did cant,
When we were fou.

When we were weary'd at the gowff,
Then Maggy Johnstoun's was our howff;
Now a' our gamesters may sit dowff,
Wi' hearts like lead;
Death wi' his rung rax'd her a yowff,(2)
And sae she died.

Maun we be forc'd thy skill to tine,
For which we will right sair repine?
Or hast thou left to bairns of thine
The pawky knack
Of brewing ale amaist like wine,
That gar'd us crack.

Sae brawly did a pease-scon toast
Biz i' the queff, and flie the frost;(3)

(1) Is a cant phrase: when one leaves a little in the cup, he is advised to "pick his bone," i. e. drink it clean out.
(2) Reached her a blow.
(3) Or fright the frost or coldness out of it.

There we got fou wi' little cost,
And muckle speed:
Now, wae worth death! our sport's a' lost,
Since Maggy 's dead.

Ae summer night (1) I was sae fou,
Amang the riggs I gaed to spew;
Syne down on a green bawk, I trow
I took a nap,
And soucht a night balillilow,
As sound 's a tap.

And when the dawn begoud to glow,
I hirsled up my dizzy pow,
Frae 'mang the corn like wirrycow,
Wi' bains sae sair,
And ken'd nae mair than if a yow
How I came there.

Some said it was the pith of broom
That she stow'd in her masking-loom,
Which in our heads rais'd sic a soom;
Or some wild seed,
Which aft the chaping stoup did toom,
But fill'd our head.

But now since 'tis sae that we must
Not in the best ale put our trust,
But whan we 're auld return to dust
Without remead,
Why should we tak it in disgust
That Maggy 's dead?

(1) The two following stanzas are a true narrative:
On that slid place where I maist brake my bains,
To be a warning I set up twa stains,
That nane may venture there as I hae done,
Unless wi' frosted nails he clink'd his shoon.

Of warldly comforts she was rife,
And liv'd a lang and hearty life,
Right free of care, or toil, or strife,
Till she was stale,
And ken'd to be a kanny wife
At brewing ale.

Then farewell, Maggy, douce and fell,
Of brewers a' thou beur the bell;
Let a' thy gossies yelp and yell,
And without feed,
Guess whether ye're in heaven or hell,
They 're sure ye 're dead!

EPITAPH.

O RARE MAGGY JOHNSTOUN!

[* 1714.]

AN ELEGY

ON JOHN COWPER,

The Kirk-treasurer's man.(1)

I WARN ye a' to greet and drone:
John Cowper 's dead—Ohon, Ohon!

(1) It is necessary for the illustration of this elegy to strangers, to let them a little into the history of the kirk-treasurer and his man. The treasurer is chosen every year, a citizen respected for riches and honesty. He is vested with an absolute power to seize and imprison the girls that are too impatient to have on their green gown before it be hemmed. Them he strictly examines, but no liberty is to be granted till a fair account be given of those persons they have obliged: It must be so. A list is frequently given, sometimes of a dozen or thereby, of married or unmarried unfair traders, whom they secretly assisted in running their

To fill his post alake there 's none
That with sic speed
Could sa'r sculdudry (1) out like John;
But now he 's dead!

He was right nacky in his way,
And eydent baith be night and day;
He wi' the lads his part could play,
When right sair fleed,
He gart them good bull-siller (2) pay;
But now he 's dead.

Of whore-hunting he gat his fill,
And made be 't mony a pint and gill;
Of his braw post he thought nae ill,
Nor did nae need:
Now they may mak a kirk and mill
O 't, since he 's dead!

Although he was nae man of weir,
Yet mony a ane, wi' quaking fear,
Durst scarce afore his face appear,
But hide their head:
The wylie carle, he gather'd gear,
And yet he's dead!

goods: these his lordship makes pay to some purpose, according to their ability for the use of the poor. If the lads be obstreperous, the kirk-sessions,—and worst of all, the stool of repentance,—are threatened, a punishment which few of any spirit can bear. The treasurer being changed every year never comes to be perfectly acquainted with the affair; but their general servant, continuing for a long time, is more expert at discovering such persons, and the places of their resort, which makes him capable of doing himself and customers both a good or ill turn. John Cowper maintained this post with activity and good success for several years. [* See Tytler's Remarks, p. 56, *ante*.]

(1) In allusion to a scent dog. *S'ar*, from savour or smell. *Sculdudry*, a name commonly given to whoring.

(2) *Bull-silver*,—

'She saw the cow well serv'd, and took a groat.'—GAY.

Ay, now to some part far awa',
Alas he 's gane and left it a';
May be to some sad whilliwha (1)
Of fremit blood!
'Tis an ill wind that dis na blaw
Somebody good.

Fy upon Death! he was to blame,
To whirle poor John to his lang hame.
But though his arse be cauld, yet fame,
Wi' tout of trumpet,
Shall tell how Cowper's awfou name
Could flie a strumpet.

He ken'd the bawds and louns fou well,
And where they us'd to rant and reel;
He paukily on them could steal,
And spoil their sport;
Aft did they wish the muckle de'il
Might take him for 't.

But ne'er a ane of them he spar'd,
E'en though there was a drunken laird
To draw his sword, and make a faird, (2)
In their defence;
John quietly put them in the guard,
To learn mair sense:

There maun they lie till sober grown,
The lad neist day his fault maun own;

(1) *Whilliwha*, is a kind of an insinuating deceitful fellow. *Fremit blood*, not a-kin, because he had then no legitimate heirs of his own body.
(2) A bustle like a bully.

And to keep a' things hush and low'n
He minds the poor; (1)
Syne after a' his ready 's shown,
He damns the whore.

And she, poor jade, withoutten din,
Is sent to Leith-wynd-fit (2) to spin,
With heavy heart, and cleathing thin,
And hungry wame,
And ilka month a well-paid skin,
To mak her tame.

But now they may scour up and down,
And safely gang their wakes arown,
Spreading their claps through a' the town,
But fear or dread;
For that great kow to bawd and lown,
John Cowper 's dead.

Shame faw ye'r chandler-chafts, (3) O Death!
For stapping of John Cowper's breath,
The loss of him is public skaith.
I dare well say,
To quat the grip he was right laith
This mony a day.

POSTSCRIPT.

Of umquhile John to lie or bann,
Shaws but ill-will, and looks right shan,

(1) Pays hush-money to the treasurer.
(2) The house-of-correction at the foot of Leith wynd; such as Bridewell in London.
(3) Lean or meagre cheeked; when the bones appear like the sides or corners of a candlestick, which in Scots we call a chandler.

But some tell odd tales of the man;
For fifty head
Can gie their aith they 've seen him gawn (1)
Since he was dead.

Keek but up through the Stinking stile, (2)
On Sunday morning a wee while,
At the kirk door, out frae an aisle,
It will appear:
But tak good tent ye dinna file
Ye'r breeks for fear.

For well we wat it is his ghaist:
Wow, wad some fouk that can do 't best, (3)
Speak till 't and hear what it confest!
'Tis a good deed
To send a wand'ring saul to rest
Amang the dead.

1717.

AN ELEGY

ON LUCKY WOOD. (4)

O CANONGATE! poor elritch hole,
What loss, what crosses dost thou thole!

(1) The common people, when they tell their tales of ghosts appearing, say, he has been seen *gawn*, or stalking.

(2) Opposite to this place is the door of the church, which he attended, being a beadle.

(3) It is another vulgar notion, that a ghost will not be laid to rest till some priest speak to it, and get an account of what disturbs it.

(4) Lucky Wood kept an alehouse in the Canongate; was much respected for hospitality, honesty, and the neatness both of her person and house.

London and death (1) gar thee look drole,
And hing thy head;
Wow, but thou hast e'en a cauld coal
To blaw indeed!

Hear me, ye hills, and every glen,
Ilk craig, ilk cleugh, and hollow den,
And echo shrill, that a' may ken
The waefou thud
Be rackless Death, wha came unseen (2)
To Lucky Wood.

She 's dead, o'er true! she 's dead and gane,—
Left us and Willie (3) burd alane,
To bleer and greet, to sob and mane,
And rugg our hair,
Because we 'll ne'er see her again
For ever mair!

She gae'd as fait as a new preen,
And kept her housie snod and been;
Her pewther glanc'd upo' your een
Like siller plate;
She was a donsie wife and clean,
Without debate.

It did ane good to see her stools,
Her boord, fire-side, and facing-tools; (4)

(1) The place of her residence being the greatest sufferer by the loss of our members of parliament—which London now enjoys—many of them having their houses there, being the suburb of Edinburgh nearest the king's palace. This, with the death of Lucky Wood, are sufficient to make the place ruinous.

(2) Or unsent for. There is nothing extraordinary in this, it being his common custom; except in some few instances of late, since the falling of the bubbles, i. e. South-Sea adventurers.

(3) Her husband William Wood.

(4) Stoups, or pots and cups; so called from the facers.

Rax, chandlers, tangs, and fire-shools,
Basket wi' bread.
Poor facers (1) now may chew pea-hools,
Since Lucky 's dead!

She ne'er gae in a lawin fause, (2)
Nor stoups a' froath aboon the hause,
Nor kept dow'd tip within her waws,
But reaming swats;
She ne'er ran sour jute, because
It gees the batts.

She had the gate sae well to please,
With gratis beef, dry fish, or cheese,
Which kept our purses ay at ease,
And health in tift,
And lent her fresh nine gallon trees
A hearty lift.

She gae us oft hail legs o' lamb,
And did nae hain her mutton ham;
Then aye at Yule whene'er we came,
A braw goose-pye;
And was na that good belly-baum?
Nane dare deny.

The writer-lads fow well may mind her;
Furthy was she, her luck design'd her

(1) The *facers* were a club of fair drinkers, who inclined rather to spend a shilling on ale than two pence for meat. They had their name from a rule which they observed of obliging themselves to throw all they left in the cup in their own faces; wherefore, to save their face and clothes, they prudently sucked the liquor clean out.

(2) All this verse is a fine picture of an honest ale-seller—a rarity.

Their common mither; sure nane kinder
Ever brake bread;
She has na left her mak behind her,
But now she 's dead!

To the sma' hours we aft sat still,
Nick'd round our toasts and snishing-mill;
Good cakes we wanted ne'er at will,
The best of bread;
Which aften cost us mony a gill
To Aikenhead. (1)

Could our saut tears like Clyde down rin,
And had we cheeks like Corra's lin, (2)
That a' the warld might hear the din
Rair frae ilk head!
She was the wale of a' her kin,
But now she 's dead.

O Lucky Wood! tis' hard to bear
The loss. But oh! we maun forbear:
Yet sall thy memory be dear
While blooms a tree;
And after-ages' bairns will spear
'Bout thee and me. (3)

EPITAPH.

Beneath this sod
Lies Lucky Wood,

(1) The Nether-bow porter, to whom Lucky's customers were often obliged for opening the port for them when they staid out till the small hours after midnight.

(2) A very high precipice nigh Lanark, over which the river Clyde falls, making a great noise which is heard some miles off.

(3) [* See p. 55, *ante*.]

Whom a' men might put faith in;
Wha was na sweer,
While she winn'd here,
To cram our wames for naithing.

1721.

AN ELEGY

ON PATIE BIRNIE. (1)

The famous fiddler of Kinghorn;
Who gart the lieges gawff and girn ay,
Aft till the cock proclaim'd the morn.
Tho' baith his weeds and mirth were pirny; (2)
He roos'd these things were langest worn,
The brown ale was his kirn ay,
And faithfully he toom'd his horn.

And then besides his valiant acts,
At bridals he wan many placks.

HAB. SIMPSON.

IN sonnet slee the man I sing,
His rare engine in rhyme shall ring,
Wha slaid the stick out o'er the string
With sic an art;
Wha sang sae sweetly to the spring,
And rais'd the heart.

Kinghorn may rue the ruefou day
That lighted Patie to his clay,
Wha gart the hearty billies stay,
And spend their cash,
To see his snowt, to hear him play,
And gab sae gash.

(1) [* See Tytler's Remarks, p. 58, *ante*.]

(2) When a piece of stuff is wrought unequally, part coarse and part fine, of yarn of different colours, we call it pirny, from the pirn, or little hollow reed, which holds the yarn in the shuttle.

When strangers landed, (1) wow sae thrang,
Fuffin and peghing, he wad gang,
And crave their pardon that sae lang
He 'd been a-coming;
Syne his bread-winner out he 'd bang,
And fa' to buming.

"Your honour's father, (2) dead and gane,"—
For him he first wa'd mak' his mane;
But soon his face (3) could mak' ye fain,
When he did sough,
"O wiltu, wiltu do 't again!" (4)
And grain'd and leugh.

This sang he made frae his ain head; (5)
And eke "The auld man's mare she 's dead,
Tho' peets and turfs and a 's to lead:"
O fye upon her!—
"A bonny auld thing this indeed,
An 't like your honour."

After ilk tune he took a sowp,
And bann'd wi birr the corky cowp (6)

(1) It was his custom to watch when strangers went into a public house, and attend them; pretending they had sent for him, and that he could not get away sooner from other company.

(2) It was his first compliment to one, though he had perhaps never seen him nor any of his predecessors, that "well he ken'd his honour's father, and been merry with him, and an excellent good fellow he was."

(3) Showing a very particular comicalness in his looks and gestures, laughing and groaning at the same time. He plays, sings, and breaks in with some queer tale twice or thrice e'er he get through the tune. His beard is no small addition to the diversion. [* There is a head of Patie Birnie in Caulfield's 'Portraits, Memoirs, &c. of Remarkable Persons from the Revolution in 1688 to the end of the Reign of George II.' He is represented as a smirking rogue, with a large Rabelais-looking forehead, a curling beard, a cloak, and his fiddle in his hand. How the portrait was obtained, we are not informed.—*Chambers.*]

(4) The name of a tune he played upon all occasions.

(5) He boasted of being poet as well as musician.

(6) Cursed strongly the light-headed fellows who run to Italy to learn soft music.

That to the Papists' country scowp,
To lear ha, ha's,
Frae chiels that sang hap, stap, and lowp,
Wantin the b—s.

That beardless capons are na men,
We by their fozie springs might ken;
But ours, he said, could vigour len'
To men o' weir,
And gar them stout to battle sten'
Withoutten fear.

How first he practis'd ye shall hear:—
The harn pan of an umquhile mare
He strung, and strak sounds saft and clear
Out o' the pow,
Which fir'd his saul, and gart his ear,
With gladness glow.

Sae some auld-gabbet poets tell,
Jove's nimble son and leckie snell
Made the first fiddle of a shell, (1)
On which Apollo
With meikle pleasure play'd himsel
Baith jig and solo.

O Johny Stocks! (2) What 's come o' thee?
I 'm sure thou 'lt break thy heart and die;
Thy Birnie gane, thou 'lt never be
Nor blyth, nor able
To shake thy short houghs merrily
Upon a table!

(1) *Tuque testudo, resonare septem*
Callida nervis. HOR.

(2) A man of low stature, but very broad; a loving friend of his, who used to dance to his music.

How pleasant was 't to see thee diddle,
And dance sae finely to his fiddle,
With nose forgainst a lass's middle,
And briskly brag,
With cutty steps to ding their striddle,
And gar them fag.

He catch'd a crishy webster loun
At runkling o' his deary's gown,
And wi' a rung came o'er his crown,
For being there;
But starker Thrums (1) got Patie down,
And knoost him sair.

Wae worth the dog! he maist had fell'd him,
Revengefu' Pate aft green'd to geld him;
He aw'd amends, and that he tell'd him,
And bann'd to do 't;
He took the tid, and fairly sell'd him
For a recruit.

Pate was a carle of canny sense,
And wanted ne'er a right bein spence, (2)
And laid up dollars in defence
'Gainst eild and gout;
Well judging gear in future tense
Could stand for wit.

Yet prudent fouk may tak' the pet:
Anes thrawart porter (3) wad na let

(1) A cant name for a weaver.

(2) Good store of provision; the spence being a little apartment for meal, flesh, &c.

(3) This happened in the duke of Rothes's time. His Grace was giving an entertainment, and Patrick being denied entry by the servants, he, either from a cunning view of the lucky consequence, or in a passion, did what is described.

Him in while latter meat was hett;
He gaw'd fou sair,
Flang in his fiddle o'er the yett,
Whilk ne'er did mair.

But profit may arise frae loss:
Sae Pate got comfort by his cross;
Soon as he wan within the close,
He dously drew in
Mair gear frae ilka gentle goss
Than bought a new ane.

When lying bed-fast sic and sair,
To parish-priest he promis'd fair,
He ne'er wad drink fou any mair;
But hale and tight,
He prov'd the auld man to a hair,—
Strute (1) ilka night.

The haly dad with care essays
To wile him frae his wanton ways,
And tell'd him of his promise twice:
Pate answer'd cliver,—
"Wha tents what people raving says
When in a fever?"

At Bothwell brig (2) he gade to fight;
But being wise as he was wight,
He thought it shaw'd a saul but slight,
Daftly to stand,
And let gunpowder wrang his sight,
Or fiddle-hand:

(1) Drunk.

(2) Upon Clyde, where the famous battle was fought in 1679, for the determination of some kittle points: but I dare not assert that it was religion carried my hero to the field.

Right pawkily he left the plain,
Nor o'er his shoulder look'd again,
But scour'd o'er moss and moor amain,
To Rieky straight,
And tald how mony whigs were slain,
Before they faught.

Sae I've lamented Patie's end:
But, lest your grief o'er far extend,
Come dight your cheeks, ye'r brows unbend,
And lift ye'r head,
For to a' Britain be it ken'd,
He is not dead.

1721.

CHRIST'S KIRK ON THE GREEN. (1)

IN THREE CANTOS.

Κονσιδερ ιτ ναριλι, ριδ αφτνηρ θαν ενις,
Ουιλ ατ εν βλινκ σλι ποετρι νοτ τεν ις.

Γ. Δουγλας.

CANTO I. (2)

Wes nevir in Scotland hard nor sene
Sic dansing nor deray, (3)
Nouthir at Falkland (4) on the grene,

(1) [* See Life, p. 7, and Tytler's Remarks, p. 60, *ante*.]

(2) The edition of the first canto is here printed from that which is given in "Poetical Remains of James I." printed at Edinburgh 1783; together with the notes of the ingenious and learned editor.

(3) Merriment, riot, disorder. G. D. p. 35. and 288. From the Fr. *deroyer*. —From the same derivation is the Scots word *royet*, or *royit*, signifying romping, daft, extravagant.

(4) One of the royal houses, situated on the north side of the Lomond hills in the county of Fife. The castle of Falkland, a noble edifice, was habitable in the beginning of the present century, though now in ruins.

Nor Pebillis (1) at the play;
As wes of wowaris, (2) as I wene,
At Christis Kirk (3) on ane day:
Thair came out Kitties, (4) weshen clene,
In thair new kirtillis of gray,
Full gay,
At Christis Kirk of the grene that day.

To dans thir damysellis thame dicht, (5)
Thir lasses licht of laitis, (6)
Thair gluvis war of the raffel rycht, (7)
Thair shune war of the straitis, (8)
Thair kirtillis war of Lynkome licht, (9)
Weil prest with mony plaitis,

(1) Or Peebles; the head-town of the county of Tweeddale, situated on the banks of the river Tweed. The annual games of archery, and other pastimes at Peebles, were of very ancient institution. Our poet, King James I., is said to have often resorted to that annual festivity.

(2) Wooers, suitors.

(3) The scene of action of this poem is traditionally said to have been a place of this name, within the parish of Kinethmont, in that part of the county of Aberdeen, near Lesly, called the Garrioch. In its neighbourhood is the hill of Dunnideer, which rises like a pyramid in the midst of the plain of Garrioch; on the top of which are the remains of a castle, said to have been a hunting-seat of the Scottish kings. Allan Ramsay seems to have mistaken the above situation for Lesly in the county of Fife.

(4) Rustic, romping, country lasses, drest in their new apparel. Bishop Gibson's edition has it,

> "For there came Kitty washen clean,
> In her new gown of grey," &c.

which is substituting the proper name of one girl (Kitty, or Kattie) in place of the general epithet given to the whole country-lasses, that were assembled on this occasion.

(5) Dressed, or prepared for the occasion, G. D. p. 223. 395.

(6) The context plainly requires "light-heeled girls:" *laitis* literally signifies joints; probably derived from the Danish *led*, a joint, a knuckle. See Wolfe's Dan. Dict. in vo. led. G. C.

(7) Probably from the Saxon *ra*, or *rae*, a roe-deer; and *ffell*, a skin.

(8) Probably a local name for a particular kind of leather at that period.

(9) Gowns or petticoats of Lincoln manufacture.

Thay war sa nyce quhen men thame nicht, (1)
Thay squelit lyke ony gaitis, (2)
Sa loud,
At Christis Kirk, &c.

Of all thir madynis, myld as meid,
Wes nane sa jympt (3) as Gillie;
As ony rose hir rude wes reid, (4)
Hir lyre (5) wes lyke the lillie;
Fow zellow zellow wes hir heid,
Bot scho of lufe wes sillie; (6)
Thot all hir kin had sworn hir deid, (7)
Scho wald haif bot sweit Willie
Alane,
At Christis Kirk, &c.

Scho skornit Jok, and skrapit (8) at him,
And murgeonit him (9) with mokkis;
He wald haif lufit, (10) scho wald not lat him,
For all his zellow lokkis;
He chereist hir, scho bad gae chat him, (11)
Scho compt him not twa clokkis; (12)

(1) When men came nigh or toyed with them.
(2) Shrieked like wild goats.
(3) Neat, tight, slender.
(4) Her colour or complexion was red. G. D. 408.
(5) Her skin, bosom, or neck. The *lyre*, or *lure*, in vulgar speech, is the breast or bosom.
(6) *Seile, sele*, in our old language, signifies happy. G. D. Also simple, weak. The reader may take it in either sense.
(7) Should have doomed her to death.
(8) Scropit, mocked or scorned. John Knox's Hist. p. 93.
(9) Made mouths at, or ridiculed him.
(10) Loved.
(11) Go to the gallows. G. D. 239.
(12) She reckoned him not worth two clocks, or beetles.

Sa schamefully his schort goun (1) set him,
His lymis wer lyk two rokkis, (2)
Scho said,
At Christis Kirk, &c.

Tam Lutar wes thair menstral meit,
O Lord, as he could lanss! (3)
He playit sa schrill, and sang sae sweit,
Quhile Tousy tuke a transs, (4)
Auld Lightfute thair he did forleit, (5)
And counterfuttet Franss; (6)
He used himself as man discreit,
And up tuke Moreiss danss (7)
Full loud,
At Christis Kirk, &c.

Then Steven cam steppand in with stendis,
Na rynk (8) mycht him arreist; (9)
Platefute he bobit up with bendis,
For Mald he maid requiest;
He lap (10) quhill he lay on his lendis,
But reysand he wes priest,

(1) A short cloak or gown was the dress of the time, and continued so till the Restoration in 1660.

(2) His legs were like two rokkis, or distaffs; or, according to another Scottish phrase, he was spindle-shanked.

(3) Skip. G. D. 297. The meaning, as applicable to the minstrel, is explained in the next line, "He plaid sa schrill."

(4) A hop or skip. From Latin probably of *transire*, to go across.

(5) Forsake, or desert. G. D. This applies to Tousy the dancer, who scorned to dance, like auld Lightfoot, after the Scots fashion, or the reel, a well-known measure.

(6) Aped to dance after the French mode.

(7) Morrice or Moorish dances, rather of slow solemn movement, performed usually by gypsies after the Moorish manner.

(8) A ring formed to prevent intrusion. Rud. Gloss. G. D. in vo. Renk. *G. C.*

(9) Stay or stop.

(10) No Scotsman but knows *lap* is the perfect of the verb to leap. The obvious sense of the passage is, "He lap and capered so high, that he fell at his length."

Quhill that he oisted (1) at bayth endis,
For honour of the feist
That day,
At Christis Kirk, &c.

Syne Robene Roy begouth to revell, (2)
And Downy till him druggit; (3)
'Let be!' quo Jok, and caw'd him javell, (4)
And be the taill him tuggit; (5)
The kensy cleikit (6) to the cavell,
Bot, Lord, than how they luggit! (7)
Thay partit manly with a nevell, (8)
God wait gif hair was ruggit
Betwixt thame
At Christis Kirk, &c.

Ane bent a bow, sic sturt (9) coud steir him, (10)
Grit skayth wes 'd to haif skard him; (11)
He cheset a flane as did affeir him, (12)
The toder said 'Dirdum! dardum!' (13)

(1) "Hosted, or coughed at baith ends, i. e. (broke wind,) in honour of the feast." A coarse, though most humorous picture!

(2) Began to be riotous.

(3) Dragged Downy towards him.

(4) *Javeller*,—probably a troublesome fellow.

(5) Pulled him by the tail of his cloak.

(6) Snatched up: a common Scots phrase. *Cavell*, or *gavell*, probably a cudgel or rung.

(7) Pulled each other by the ears.

(8) A blow with the fist. Most of the above words, being vulgar, are now obsolete, and not to be found in any glossary. Their meaning, however, may easily be conjectured.

(9) Trouble, disturbance, vexation. G. D. p. 41, 219, 19.

(10) Move or provoke him.

(11) It would have been dangerous, or attended with skaith, to have skared or hindered him.

(12) He choosed an arrow as did effeir, *i. e.* belong to, or was fit for his purpose.

(13) The other in great fright bawled out 'Dirdum! dardum!'—Confusion! blood and murder!

Throw baith the cheikis he thocht to cheir him, (1)
Or throw the erss heif chard him;
Bot be ane aikerbraid it cam not neir him, (2)
I can nocht tell quhat marr'd him,
Thair,
At Christis Kirk, &c.

With that a freynd of his cry'd, 'Fy!'
And up ane arrow drew;
He forgit (3) it sa furiously,
The bow in flenderis (4) flew;
Sa wes the will of God, trow I,
For had the tre bene trew, (5)
Men said, that ken'd his archery,
That he had slane (6) enow
That day,
At Christis Kirk, &c.

Ane hasty hensure, (7) callit Hary,
Quha wes ane archer heynd, (8)
Tilt up (9) a taikle withouten tary,
That torment sa him teynd; (10)
I wait not quhider his hand could vary,

(1) Cheir and chard are obsolete words. We may conjecture their meaning, from the sense of the passage—to bore, or to pierce.

(2) The humour here is very arch.

(3) Here forgit means, 'He drew his bow with great fury.'

(4) The bow flew in splinters.

(5) Had the tree or wood been sound.

(6) *i. e.* That he would or might have slain many a one. The old Scots frequently use the pluperfect of the indicative, in place of the imperfect of the subjunctive.

(7) One expert at throwing a stone, by swinging the arm downwards by the side of the haunch; to hench, to throw a stone in the above manner, in place of swinging the arm upwards by the side of the head. *G. C.*

(8) Expert, handy. Rud. Gloss. G. D.

(9) Fitted up without delay his tackle, his bow and arrow.

(10) That torment or vexation so angered him; from the old English *tene* or *teen*, anger, rage. Rud. G. D. p. 57. 10.

Or the man was his freynd,
For he eschapit, throw michts of Mary, (1)
As man that na ill meynd,
But gude,
At Christis Kirk, &c.

Then Lowry, as ane lyon, lap,
And sone a flane can feddir; (2)
He hecht (3) to perss him at the pap,
Thereon to wed (4) a weddir;
He hit him on the wame a wap, (5)
It buft lyk ony bledder;
But sua his fortune wes and hap,
His doublit wes maid of ledder,
And saift him
At Christis Kirk, &c.

(1) Through the power and assistance of St. Mary.—A common saying. The foregoing figures are introduced with great humour, and happily varied. Tousie's solemn Moresco; Steven's entry or high dance; and Platefute's fandango with Mauld, his downfall, and misbehaviour, are all highly comic. Again, the awkwardness of the bowmen, showing that they had quite fallen out of the use of managing the bow, is satirized in the keenest strokes of irony. The serious affected gravity of the poet, particularly in his arch reflection, 'Such was the will of Providence,' &c. are fine ironical touches. The whole shows that the poet was master of every species of humour and ridicule,

Whether he takes Cervantes' serious air,
Or laughs and shakes in Rabelais' easy chair.

These great masters of ridicule lived a century later than King James, whose genuine vein of humour flows full and entire from its own native genius. Genius is confined to no age nor clime.

(2) And soon feathered an arrow.

(3) He eagerly aimed at the pap.

(4) To pledge.—To wad a wedder, seems to be to pledge or wager a wedder. Hence a wadset, or land given in pledge.

It may be conjectured, that when archery was in vogue among the lairds or gentry, it would be a common pastime to shoot at butts for prizes; and that a sheep or wedder, or, in other words, a dinner, as at present, might be the common prize or wager. The 18th act of king James I. first parliament, alludes probably to such a custom. It enacts, 'That wha uses not archery on the appointed holydays for shooting, the laird of the land, or sheriff, shall raise of him a wedder.'

(5) A well-known Scots phrase for a blow on the belly; a stroke not deadly, making a sound like that made on a blown-up bladder.

The buff so boisterously abaift (1) him,
That he to the eard dusht doun; (2)
The uther man for deid then left him,
And fled out o' the toune.
The wyves cam furth, and up they reft him, (3)
And fand lyfe in the loune; (4)
Then with three routis (5) up they reft him,
And cur'd him of his soune
Fra hand (6) that day,
At Christis Kirk, &c.

A yaip (7) young man, that stude him neist,
Lous'd aff a schott with yre;
He ettlit (8) the bern (9) in at the breist,
The bolt (10) flew ou'r the byre.
Ane cry'd fy! he had slane a priest (11)
A myle beyond ane myre;
Then bow and bag (12) fra him he keist,

(1) Stunned, amazed him.
(2) Dasht,—*Engl.* Fell suddenly down.
(3) Pulled him up. I scarce think our poet would have used the same words in the second verse after this.
(4) The rogue, who only feigned himself in a swoon.
(5) With three outcries they raised him up, and brought him out of his pretended swoon.
(6) Or out of hand; instantly.
The 12th stanza, as above, I have supplied from B. Gibson's edition; I doubt, however, if it is genuine, as it is not in Banatyne's MSS. However, as it naturally connects with the former stanza, and the same vein of humour runs through it, I give it to the reader. A few of the words, which Gibson had modernized from the old Scots orthography, I have restored.
(7) Yaip,—eager, ready, alert. G. D.
(8) He tried or aimed to shoot the lad in the breast.
(9) *Bairn*, often for a young man, as in G. D. 439. 22.
(10) Shaft or arrow.
(11) The worst or most atrocious of all murders.
(12) The quiver which held his arrows.
Since the introduction of fire-arms, the use of the bow in war is now quite laid aside; and, even as an exercise of sport may probably be soon forgotten. There remains still one, and only one, society in Scotland where archery is kept up, the Royal Company of Archers, which always

And fled as ferss as fyre
Of flint,
At Christis Kirk, &c.

With forks and flails they lent grit flappis,
And flang togidder lyk friggis ;(1)
With bougars of barnis (2) they beft blew kappis,
Quhyle thay of barnis maid briggis ;(3)
The reird (4) rais rudely with the rapps,
Quhen rungis (5) wer layd on riggis ;
The wyffis cam furth with cryis and clappis,
'Lo quhair my lyking ligs !' (6)
Quo thay,
At Christis Kirk, &c.

Thay gyrnit and lait (7) gird with grainis,
Ilk gossip uder grievit ;(8)
Sum strak with stings, sum gatherit stainis,
Sum fled and ill mischevit ;(9)
The menstral wan within twa wainis,
That day full weil he previt,(10)
For he cam hame with unbirst bainis,(11)

did, and at present can boast of having the chief of the Scottish nobility and gentry enrolled amongst its members. Long may this ancient institution flourish ; and the manly exercise of the bow, the care of so gallant a monarch as James I., be preserved and transmitted down to latest posterity !

(1) *Freik* is a foolish fellow. Rud. Gloss. G. D.—*G. C.*

(2) Rafters of barns dang aff blue caps.

(3) Made bridges or stepping-stones,—according to the Scots phrase,—of the berns, or lads that fell down.

(4) The reird or noise.

(5) Were laid across their backs or riggings.

(6) Lo, where my love lies.

(7) Let drive, or gave a stroke. G. D. From the A. Saxon gerd, to strike with a rod or stick.

(8) Companion, grieved or hurt his neighbour.

(9) Sore hurt or bruised.

(10) i. e. Proved himself a cautious man, that kept himself out of the fray.

(11) Unbruised bones.

Quhair fechtaris (1) wer mischievit
For evir.
At Christis Kirk, &c.

Heich Hutchon with a hissil ryss, (2)
To red (3) can throw them rummill,
He muddlit (4) thame doun lyk ony myss,
He wes na baity bummil; (5)
Thoch he wes wight, (6) he wes nocht wyss
With sic jangleurs to jummil,
For fra his thowme thay dang a sklyss,
Quhile he cryed 'Barlafummil! (7)
I am slane!'
At Christis Kirk, &c.

Quhen that he saw his blude sa reid,
To fle might na man let (8) him,
He weind (9) it bene for auld done feid,
He thocht ane cryed, 'Haif at him!'
He gart his feit defend his heid, (10)
The far fairer it set him,
Quhile he wes past out of all pleid, (11)

(1) Fighters.
(2) A hazel rung or sapling. Ryce signifies young or branch wood.
(3) To separate or part the combatants, he rumbled or rushed through them.
(4) Overturned, drove them like mice before him.
(5) A bumbler or bungler of any piece of work.
(6) He was not wise to interfere with such janglers, although he was strong.
(7) A Scots phrase, in use among boys at their sports, for a stop or cessation. When one trips or stumbles, they cry *barle;* probably from the French word *parler*, and *fumle* a fall. G. D.
(8) Stop, hinder.
(9) He thought or imagined it done in retaliation of some former feid, offence, or ill will.
(10) It set or became him better to take to his heels than to fight. The humour here is extremely arch.
(11) Out of all challenge or opposition. G. D. III.

He suld bene swift (1) that gat him
Throw speid,
At Christis Kirk, &c.

The town-soutar in grief was bowdin, (2)
His wyfe hang (3) in his waist;
His body wes with blud all browdin, (4)
He grainit lyk ony gaist;
Hir glitterand hair that wes full gowdin,
Sa hard in lufe him laist, (5)
That for hir sake he wes na yowdin, (6)
Seven myle that he wes chaist,
And mair,
At Christis Kirk, &c.

The millar wes of manly mak,
To meit him wes na mowis; (7)
Thai durst not ten cum him to tak,
Sa nowitit (8) he thair powis;
The buschment haill (9) about him brak,
And bickert him with bowis,
Syn traytourly behind his back
They hewit him on the howiss (10)
Behind,
At Christis Kirk, &c.

Twa that wer herdsmen of the herd,
Ran upon udderis lyk rammis;

(1) He would have been swift of foot that could have laid hold of him.
(2) Full of, or swelled with rage. Rud. Gloss. G. Dougl. in vo. *Bodnyt.*
(3) Hung at, or clung to his waist.
(4) Besmeared or embroidered.
(5) Laced.
(6) *Yolden* or *yulding*, in Tyrwhit's Gloss. Chan. *G. C.*
(7) No sport or jest.
(8) He so annoyed their heads. Rud. Gloss. G. D. vo. Noy.
(9) The whole body lay in ambush, and broke forth on him. G. D.
(10) On the howis, or houghs.

Then followit feymen (1) richt unaffeird,
Bet on with barrow trammis;
But quhair thair gobbis wer ungeird, (2)
Thay gat upon the gammis, (3)
Quhyle bludy berkit wes thair baird,
As thay had worriet lammis
Maist lyk,
At Christis Kirk, &c.

The wyves kest up a hideous yell,
When all thir younkeris yokkit,
Als ferss as ony fyre flaughts (4) fell,
Freiks (5) to the field thay flokit;
The carlis with clubbis cou'd udir quell,
Quhyle blude at breistis out bokkit, (6)
Sa rudely rang the common bell,
Quhyll all the stepill rokit (7)
For reid, (8)
At Christis Kirk, &c.

Quhen thay had berit (9) lyk baitit bullis,
And branewod (10) brynt in bails, (11)
Thay wer als meik as ony mulis
That mangit wer with mailis; (12)

(1) Unhappy, mischievous. G. D.—Foolish. Skene.
(2) When their cheeks or gaps were bare or undefended.
(3) They got upon the gammis or gums.
(4) Flashes of lightning.
(5) Light-headed, freakish, forward fellows. Rud. Gloss. G. Dougl.
(6) Vomited.
(7) Shook.
(8) Or rade, warfare. Hence the "raid of Ruthven;" the "raid of the Reid-squair;" skirmishes or scuffles.
(9) Perh aps bearded or baited each other like bulls.
(10) Or distempered in their brains.
(11) In flames:—the phrase seems now quite obsolete. Rud. Gloss. G. Dougl. vo. *Bele*. *G. C.*
(12) Meek as mules that are tired, and manged or galled with mails or heavy burdens.

For faintness tha forfochtin fulis (1)
Fell doun lyk flauchter failis, (2)
And fresch men cam in and hail'd the dulis, (3)
And dang tham doun in dailis (4)
Bedene, (5)
At Christis Kirk, &c.

Quhen all wes done, Dik with ane aix
Cam furth to fell a fuddir; (6)
Quod he, 'Quhair ar yon hangit smaix, (7)
Rycht now wald slane my bruder!'
His wyf bad him ga hame, Gib glaiks, (8)
And sa did Meg his muder;
He turnit and gaif them bayth thair paikis, (9)
For he durst ding nane udir,
For feir,
At Christis Kirk of the grene that day.

(1) These fools that had tired themselves with fighting.
(2) Or turfs cast with a spade well known in Scotland called the flauchter-spade.
(3) A well-known phrase at foot-ball: when the ball touches the goal or mark, the winner calls out 'Hail!' or it has hailed the dule or dail.
(4) Dang them down in heaps.
(5) Or bedeen, instantly, out of hand.
(6) A load or heap. Perhaps from fouth, a vulgar Scots word for plenty, or many in number.
(7) This epithet is now obsolete.
(8) Light-headed, foolish braggadochio.
(9) For which he gave the women their paiks, or a threatening scold, which is sometimes accompanied with blows; as he durst not ding or encounter any others.

1715.

CANTO II.(1)

But there had been mair bluid and skaith,
Sair harship and great spulie,
And mony a ane had gotten his death
By this unsonsie tooly,—
But that the bauld good-wife of Baith,
Arm'd wi' a great kail gully,
Came bellyflaught,(2) and loot an aith,
She'd gar them a' be hooly (3)
Fou fast that day.

Blyth to win aff sae wi' hale banes,
Though mony had clow'r'd pows;
And draggl'd sae 'mang muck and stanes,
They look'd like wirrykows:
Quoth some, who maist had tint their aynds,—
"Let 's see how a' bowls rows;(4)

(1) The king having painted the rustic squabble, with an uncommon spirit, in a most ludicrous manner, in a stanza of verse the most difficult to keep the sense complete, as he has done, without being forced to bring in words for crambo's sake, where they return so frequently,—I have presumed to imitate his majesty, in continuing the laughable scene. Ambitious to imitate so great an original, I put a stop to the war, called a congress, and made them sign a peace, that the world might have their picture in their more agreeable hours of drinking, dancing, and singing.—The following cantos were written, the one in 1715, the other in 1718; about 300 years after the first. Let no worthy poet despair of immortality; good sense will be always the same, in spite of the revolutions of fashion, and the change of language. [* See Tytler's Remarks, p. 60, *ante*.]

(2) Came in great haste, as it were flying full upon them with her arms full spread, as a falcon with expanded wings comes sousing upon her prey.

(3) Desist immediately.

(4) A bowling-green phrase, commonly used when people would examine any affair that is a little ravelled.

And quat their brulziement at anes;
Yon gully is nae mows,
Forsooth this day!"

Quoth Hutchon, (1) "I am well content,
I think we may do war;
Till this time tomond I 'se indent
Our claiths of dirt will sa'r;
Wi' nevels I'm amaist fawn faint,
My chafts are dung a char!"
Then took his bonnet to the bent,
And dadit aff the glar,
Fou clean that day.

Tam Taylor, (2) wha in time of battle,
Lay as gin some had fell'd him,
Got up now wi' an unco rattle,
As nane there durst a quell'd him:
Bauld Bess flew till him wi' a brattle,
And spite of his teeth held him
Close by the craig, and with her fatal
Knife shored she would geld him,
For peace that day.

Syne a' wi' ae consent shook hands,
As they stood in a ring;
Some red their hair, some set their bands,
Some did their sark-tails wring.
Then for a hap to shaw their brands,
They did their minstrel bring,

(1) Vide Canto I. He is brave, and the first man for an honourable peace.

(2) Vide Canto I. He is a coward, but would appear valiant when he finds the rest in peace.

Where clever houghs like willi wands,
At ilka blythesome spring,
Lap high that day.

Claud Peky was na very blate,
He stood nae lang a dreigh;
For by the wame he gripped Kate,
And gar'd her gi'e a skreigh:
"Had aff!" quoth she, "ye filthy slate,
Ye stink o' leeks, O feigh!
Let gae my hands, I say, be quait!"
And vow gin she was skeigh
And mim that day!

Now settled gossies sat, and keen
Did for fresh bickers birle;(1)
While the young swankies on the green
Took round a merry tirle.
Meg Wallet wi' her pinky e'en
Gart Lawrie's heart-strings dirle;
And fouk wad threap, that she did green
For what wad gar her skirle
And skreigh some day.

The manly miller, haff and haff,(2)
Came out to shaw good will,
Flang by his mittens and his staff,
Cry'd, "Gi'e me Paty's Mill!"
He lap bawk-hight,(3) and cry'd, "Had aff!"
They rees'd him that had skill;
"He wad do 't better," quoth a cawff,
Had he another gill
Of usquebay!"

(1) Contributed for fresh bottles.
(2) Half fuddled.
(3) So high that his head could strike the loft or joining of the couples.

Furth started neist a pensy blade,
And out a maiden took;
They said that he was Falkland bred, (1)
And danced by the book;
A souple taylor to his trade,
And when their hands he shook,
Ga'e them what he got frae his dad,
Videlicet, the yuke,
To claw that day.

When a' cry'd out he did sae weel,
He Meg and Bess did call up;
The lasses babb'd about the reel,
Gar'd a' their hurdies wallop,
And swat like pownies when they speel
Up braes, or when they gallop,
But a thrawn knublock hit his heel,
And wives had him to haul up,
Haff fell'd that day.

But mony a pawky look and tale
Gaed round when glowming hous'd them; (2)
The ostler wife brought ben good ale,
And bad the lasses rouze them:
"Up wi' them lads, and I'se be bail
They 'll loo ye and ye touze them!"
Quoth gawsie, "This will never fail
Wi' them that this gate wooes them,
On sic a day!"

Syne stools and forms were drawn aside,
And up raise Willie Dadle,

(1) He had been a journeyman to the king's tailor, and had seen court dancing.
(2) Twilight brought them into the house.

A short-hought man, but fou o' pride,
He said the fidler plaid ill:
"Let 's hae the pipes," quoth he, "beside!"
Quoth a', "That is nae said ill!"
He fits the floor syne wi' the bride,
To Cuttymun (1) and Treeladle,
Thick, thick that day.

In the mean time in came the laird,
And by some right did claim
To kiss and dance wi' Mausie Aird,
A dink and dortie dame:
But O poor Mause was aff her guard,
For back-gate frae her wame,
Beckin she loot a fearfu' raird,
That gart her think great shame,
And blush that day.

Auld Steen led out Maggy Forsyth,
He was her ain good brither;
And ilka ane was unco blythe,
To see auld fouk sae clever.
Quoth Jock, wi' laughing like to rive,
"What think ye o' my mither?
Were my dad dead, let me ne'er thrive
But she wad get anither
Goodman this day!"

Tam Lutter had a muckle dish,
And betwixt ilka tune,
He laid his lugs in 't like a fish,
And suckt till it was done;
His bags were liquor'd to his wish,
His face was like a moon; (2)

(1) A tune that goes very quick.
(2) Round, full and shining. When one is staring full of drink, he is said to have a face like a full moon.

But he could get nae place to pish
In, but his ain twa shoon,
For thrang that day.

The letter-gae of haly rhime, (1)
Sat up at the board-head,
And a' he said was thought a crime
To contradict indeed:
For in clark lear he was right prime,
And cou'd baith write and read, (2)
And drank sae firm till ne'er a styme
He could keek on a bead (3)
Or book that day.

When he was strute, twa sturdy chiels,
Be 's oxter and be 's coller,
Help up frae cowping o' the creels, (4)
The liquid logic scholar.
When he came hame his wife did reel,
And rampage in her choler;
With that he brake the spinning wheel,
That cost a good rix-dollar
And mair, some say.

Near bed-time now, ilk weary wight
Was gaunting for his rest;
For some were like to tine their sight,
Wi' sleep and drinking strest.
But ithers that were stomach-tight,
Cry'd out, "It was nae best

(1) The reader, or church-precentor, who lets go, i. e. gives out the tune to be sung by the rest of the congregation.
(2) A rarity in those days.
(3) He could not count his beads after the Roman Catholic manner which was the religion then in fashion.
(4) From turning topsy-turvy.

To leave a supper that was dight
To brownies,(1) or a ghaist,
To eat or day !"

On whomelt tubs lay twa lang dails,
On them stood mony a goan,
Some fill'd wi' brachan, some wi' kail,
And milk het frae the loan.
Of daintiths they had routh and wale,
Of which they were right fon;
But naithing wad gae down but ale
Wi' drunken Donald Don,
The smith, that day.

Twa times aught bannocks in a heap,
And twa good junts of beef,
Wi' hind and fore spaul of a sheep,
Drew whittles frae ilk sheath;
Wi' gravy a' their beards did dreep,
They kempit wi' their teeth;
A kebbuck syn that maist could creep
Its lane pat on the sheaf,(2)
In stons that day.

The bride was now laid in her bed,
Her left leg ho was flung;(3)
And Geordie Gib was fidging glad,
Because it hit Jean Gunn;

(1) Many whimsical stories are handed down to us, by old women, of these brownies; they tell us they were a kind of drudging spirits, who appeared in the shape of rough men, would have lain familiarly by the fire all night, threshed in the barn, brought a midwife at a time, and done many such kind offices: but none of them have been seen in Scotland since the Reformation, as saith the wise John Brown.

(2) A cheese full of crawling mites crowned the feast.

(3) The practice of throwing the bridegroom or the bride's stocking when they are going to bed, is well known: the person whom it lights on is to be next married of the company.

She was his jo, and aft had said,
"Fy, Geordie, had your tongue,
Ye's ne'er get me to be your bride!"
But chang'd her mind when bung,
That very day.

"Tehee!" (2) quoth Touzie, when she saw
The cathel coming ben;
It pyping het ged round them a';
The bride she made a fen,
To sit in wylicoat sae braw,
Upon her nether en;
Her lad lik ony cock did craw,
That meets a clocking hen, (2)
And blyth were they.

The souter, miller, smith, and Dick,
Lawrie, and Hutchon bauld,—
Carles that keep nae very strict
Be hours, though they were auld;
Nor cou'd they e'er leave aff that trick;
But whare good ale was sald,
They drank a' night, e'en tho' auld Nick
Should tempt their wives to scald
Them for 't neist day.

Was ne'er in Scotland heard or seen
Sic banquetting and drinking,—
Sic revelling and battles keen,—
Sic dancing and sic jinkin,—
And unco wark that fell at e'en,
Whan lasses were haff-winkin,
They lost their feet and baith their een
And maidenheads gaed linken
Aff a' that day!

(2) An interjection of laughter. (1) A hatching hen.

CANTO III. (1)

Now frae th' east nook of Fife (2) the dawn
Speel'd westlines up the lift;
Carles wha heard the cock had craw'n,
Begoud to rax and rift;
And greedy wives, wi' girning thrawn,
Cry'd lasses up to thrift;
Dogs barked, and the lads frae hand
Bang'd to their breeks like drift,
Be break of day.

But some who had been fou yestreen,—
Sic as the letter-gae,—
Air up had nae will to be seen,
Grudgin their groat to pay. (3)
But what aft fristed 's no forgeen,
When fouk has nought to say;
Yet sweer were they to rake their een, (4)
Sic dizzy heads had they,
And het that day.

(1) Curious to know how my bridal folks would look next day after the marriage, I attempted this third canto, which opens with a description of the morning; then the friends come and present their gifts to the new-married couple; a view is taken of one girl (Kirsh) who had come fairly off, and of Mause who had stumbled with the laird; next a scene of drinking is represented, and the young good-man is creeled; then the character of the smith's ill-natured shrew is drawn, which leads in the description of riding the stang; next Maggy Murdy has an exemplary character of a good wise wife; deep drinking and bloodless quarrels make an end of an old tale.

(2) Where day must break upon my company, if, as I have observed, the scene is at Lesly church. ["The fact is,"—adds our poet's editor, Mr. George Chalmers,—"that Ramsay was mistaken in supposing that the scene lay near Lesly in Fife, instead of Lesly in Aberdeenshire.]

(3) Payment of the *drunken groat* is very peremptorily demanded by the common people next morning; but if they frankly confess the debt due, they are passed for twopence.

(4) Rub open their eyes.

Be that time it was fair foor days, (1)
As fou 's the house could pang,
To see the young fouk ere they raise,
Gossips came in ding dang.
And wi' a sos aboon the claiths, (2)
Ilk ane their gifts down flang:
Twa toop-horn-spoons down Maggy lays,
Baith muckle mow'd and land,
For kale or whey.

Her aunt a pair of tangs fush in,
Right bauld she spake and spruce:
"Gin your goodman shall make a din,
And gabble like a goose,
Shorin whan foo to skelp ye're skin,
Thir tangs may be of use;
Lay them enlang his pow or shin,
Wha wins syn may make roose,
Between you twa!"

Auld Bessie, in her red coat braw
Came wi' her ain oe Nanny;
An odd-like wife, they said, that saw
A moupin runckled granny:
She fley'd the kimmers ane and a',
Word gae'd she was na kanny; (3)
Nor wad they let lucky awa,
'Till she was fou wi' branny,
Like mony mae.

Steen, fresh and fastin 'mang the rest,
Came in to get his morning,

(1) Broad day-light.
(2) They commonly throw their gifts of household furniture above the bed clothes where the young folks are lying.
(3) It was reported she was a witch.

Speer'd gin the bride had tane the test (1)
And how she loo'd her corning?
She leugh as she had fan a nest,
Said, "Let a be ye'r scorning!"
Quoth Roger, "Fegs, I 've done my best,
To ge 'er a charge of horning, (2)
As well 's I may."

Kind Kirsh was there, a kanty lass,
Black ey'd, black hair'd, and bonny;
Right well red up and jimp she was,
And wooers had fow mony:
I wat na how it came to pass,
She cuddled in wi' Jonnie,
And tumbling wi' him on the grass,
Dang a' her cockernonny
A jee that day

But Mause begrutten was and bleer'd,
Look'd thowless, dowf, and sleepy;
Auld Meggy ken'd the wyte, and sneer'd,
Caw'd her a poor daft heepy:
"It 's a wise wife that kens her weird,
What tho' ye mount the creepy; (3)
There a good lesson may be learn'd,
And what the war will ye be
To stand a day?

"Or bairns can read, they first maun spell,—
I learn'd this frae my mammy,—

(1) I do not mean an oath of that name we all have heard of.
(2) Is a writ in the Scottish law, charging the debtor to make payment on pain of rebellion.—N. B. It may be left in the lock-hole if the doors be shut.
(3) The stool of repentance.

And coost a legen girth (1) mysel,
Lang or I married Tammie;
I 'se warrand ye have a' heard tell,
Of bonny Andrew Lammy,
Stiffly in loove wi' me he fell,
As soon as e'er he saw me—
That was a day!"

Het drink, fresh butter'd caiks, and cheese,
That held their hearts aboon,
Wi' clashes, mingled aft wi' lies,
Drave aff the hale forenoon;
But, after dinner—an ye please
To weary not o'er soon—
We, down to e'ening edge wi' ease,
Shall loup, and see what's done
I' the doup o' day.

Now what the friends wad fain been at,
They that were right true blue
Was e'en to get their wysons wat,
And fill young Roger fou: (2)
But the bauld billy took his maut,
And was right stiff to bow;
He fairly gae them tit for tat,
And scour'd aff healths anew,
Clean out that day.

A creel, bout fou of muckle steins (3)
They clinked on his back;

(1) Like a tub that loses one of its bottom hoops.
(2) It is a custom for the friends to endeavour, the next day after the wedding, to make the new-married man as drunk as possible.
(3) For merriment, a creel or basket is bound, full of stones, upon his back; and, if he has acted a manly part, his young wife with all imaginable speed cuts the cords, and relieves him from the burthen. If she does not, he is rallied for a fumbler.

To try the pith o' his rigg and reins,
They gart him cadge this pack.
Now as a sign he had tane pains,
His young wife was na slack,
To rin and ease his shoulder-bains,
And sneg'd the raips fou snack,
Wi' her knife that day.

Syne the blyth carles tooth and nail
Fell keenly to the wark;
To ease the gantrees of the ale,
And try wha' was maist stark;
Till boord, and floor, and a' did fail,
Wi' spilt ale in the dark;
Gart Jock's fit slide, he, like a fail,
Play'd dad, and dang the bark
Aff 's shins that day.

The souter, miller, smith, and Dick, (1)
Et cet'ra close sat cockin,
Till wasted was baith cash and tick,
Sae ill were they to slocken:
Gane out to pish in gutters thick,
Some fell, and some gaed rockin;
Sawny hang sneering on his stick,
To see bauld Hutchon bockin
Rainbows that day.

The smith's wife her black deary sought,
And fand him skin and birn: (2)
Quoth she, "This day's wark's be dear bought;"
He damn'd and gae a girn,

(1) Vide Canto II.
(2) She found him with all the marks of her drunken husband about him.

Ca'd her a jade, and said she mucht
Gae hame and scum her kirn:
"Whisht, ladren, for gin ye say ought
Mair, Ise wind ye a pirn, (1)
To reel some day!"

"Ye 'll wind a pirn! ye silly snool,
Wae worth ye'r drunken saul!"
Quoth she, and lap out o'er a stool,
And caught him by the spaul.
He shook her, and sware muckle dool,
"Ye 's thole for this, ye scaul!
Ise rive frae aff ye'r hips the hool,
And learn ye to be baul
On sic a day!"

"Your tippanizing scant o' grace,"
Quoth she, "gars me gang duddy!
Our nibour Pate sin break o' day 's
Been thumping at his studdy.
An it be true that some fowk says,
Ye 'll girn yet in a woody."
Syn wi' her nails she rave his face,
Made a' his black baird bloody
Wi' scarts that day.

A gilpy that had seen the faught,—
I wat he was nae lang,
Till he had gather'd seven or aught
Wild hempies stout and strang;
They frae a barn a kabar raught,
Ane mounted wi' a bang,

(1) A threatening expression, when one designs to contrive some mancious thing to vex you.

Betwisht twa's shoulders, and sat straught
Upon 't, and rade the stang (1)
On her that day.

The wives and gytlings a' spawn'd out
O'er middings and o'er dykes,
Wi' mony an unco skirl and shout,
Like bumbees frae their bykes;
Thro' thick and thin they scour'd about,
Plashing thro' dubs and sykes;
And sic a reird ran thro' the rout,
Gart a' the hale town-tykes
Yamph loud that day.

But d' ye see fou better bred
Was mens-fou Maggy Murdy;
She her man like a lammy led
Hame, wi' a well-wail'd wordy;
Fast frae the company he fled,
As he had tane the sturdy; (2)
She fleech'd him fairly to his bed,
Wi' ca'ing him her burdy,
Kindly that day.

But Lawrie he took out his nap
Upon a mow of pease;
And Robin spew'd in 's ain wife's lap,
He said it gae him ease.
Hutchon, with a three-lugged cap,
His head bizzen wi' bees,

(1) The riding of the stang on a woman that hath beat her husband is as I have described it, by one's riding upon a sting, or long piece of wood, carried by two others on their shoulders; where, like a herald, he proclaims the woman's name, and the manner of her unnatural action.

(2) A disease among sheep that makes them giddy, and run off from the rest of the herd.

Hit Geordy a mislushios rap,
And brak the brig o' 's neese
Right sair that day.

Syne ilka thing gae'd arse o'er head;
Chanlers, boord, stools, and stowps,
Flew thro' the house wi' muckle speed,
And there was little hopes,
But their had been some ill-done deed,
They gat sic thrawart cowps:
But a' the skaith that chanc'd indeed,
Was only on their dowps,
Wi' faws that day.

Sae whiles they toolied, whiles they drank,
Till a' their sense was smoor'd,
And in their maws there was nae mank;
Upon the forms some snoor'd;
Ithers frae aff the bunkers sank,
Wi' een like collops scor'd;
Some ramm'd their noddles wi' a clank,
E'en like a thick-scull'd lord,
On posts that day.

The young good-man to bed did clim,
His dear the door did lock in;
Crap down beyont him, and the rim
O' her wame he clapt his dock on.
She fand her lad was not in trim,
And be this same good token,
That ilka member, lith and lim,
Was souple like a doken,
'Bout him that day. (1)

(1) Notwithstanding all this my public-spirited pains, I am well assured there are a few heavy heads, who will bring down the thick of their cheeks to the side of their mouths, and, richly stupid, allege there are some

1716.

ON WIT:

THE TALE OF THE MANTING LAD.

My Easy friends, (1) since ye think fit,
This night to lucubrate on wit,—
And since ye judge that I compose
My thoughts in rhyme better than prose,—(2)
I 'll give my judgment in a sang;
And here it comes, be 't right or wrang!
But first of a' I 'll tell a tale,
That with my case runs parallel.
There was a manting lad in Fife,
Wha cou'd na' for his very life,
Speak without stammering very lang,
Yet never manted when he sang.

things in it have a meaning.—Well, I own it: and think it handsomer in a few lines to say something, than talk a great deal and mean nothing. * * * There is the moral. And, believe me, I could raise many useful notes from every character, which the ingenious will presently find out.

"Great wits sometimes may gloriously offend,
And rise to faults true critics dare not mend;
From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,
And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art." POPE.

Thus have I pursued these comical characters, having gentlemen's health and pleasure, and the good manners of the vulgar in view: the main design of comedy being to represent the follies and mistakes of low life in a just light, making them appear as ridiculous as they really are, that each who is a spectator may avoid being the object of laughter. Any body that has a mind to look sour upon it may use their freedom.

"Not laugh, beasts, fishes, fowls, nor reptiles can:
That 's a peculiar happiness of man:
When govern'd with a prudent cheerful grace,
'Tis one of the first beauties of the face."

(1) [* See Life, p. 15, *ante*.]

(2) Being but an indifferent sort of an orator, my friends would merrily allege that I was not so happy in prose as rhyme. It was carried in a vote, against which there is no opposition, and the night appointed for some lessons on wit, I was ordered to give my thoughts in verse.

His father's kiln he anes saw burning,
Which gart the lad run breathless mourning;
Hameward with cliver strides he lap,
To tell his daddy his mishap.
At distance, ere he reach'd the door,
He stood and rais'd a hideous roar.
His father, when he heard his voice,
Stept out and said, "Why a' this noise?"
The calland gap'd and glowr'd about,
But no ae word cou'd he lug out;
His dad cry'd, kenning his defect,
"Sing! Sing, or I shall break your neck!"
Then soon he gratify'd his sire,
And sang aloud, "Your kiln 's a-fire!"
Now ye 'll allow there 's wit in that,
To tell a tale sae very pat.
Bright wit appears in mony a shape,
Which some invent, and others ape.
Some shaw their wit in wearing claiths,
And some in coining of new aiths;
There 's crambo wit in making rhyme,
And dancing wit in beating time;
There 's mettled wit in story-telling,
In writing grammar, and right spelling;
Wit shines in knowledge of politics,
And, wow, what wit 's amang the critics!
So far, my mates, excuse me while I play
In strains ironic with that heav'nly ray,
Rays which the human intellect refine,
And makes the man with brilliant lustre shine,
Marking him sprung from origin divine.
Yet may a well-rigg'd ship be full of flaws,
So may loose wits regard no sacred laws:
That ship the waves will soon to pieces shake,
So 'midst his vices sinks the witty rake.

But when on first-rate virtues wit attends,
It both itself and virtue recommends,
And challenges respect where'er its blaze extends.

A PROLOGUE

SPOKEN AT THE ACTING OF 'THE ORPHAN' AND 'THE CHEATS OF SCAPIN,' BY SOME YOUNG GENTLEMEN, IN 1719. (1)

Braw lads, and bonny lasses, welcome here!
But wha 's to entertain ye?—Never speer;
Quietness is best; tho' we be leal and true,
Good sense and wit 's mair than we dare avow.
Somebody says to some fowk, we 're to blame;
That 'tis a scandal and black burning shame
To thole young callands thus to grow sae snack,
And lear—O mighty crimes!—to speak and act!
"Stage plays," quoth Dunce, "are unco' things indeed!"
He said, he gloom'd, and shook his thick boss head.
"They 're papery! papery!" cry'd his nibour neist;
"Contriv'd at Rome by some malignant priest,
To witch away fowk's minds frae doing well,
As saith Rab Ker, M'Millan, and M'Neil."
But let them tauk:—in spite of ilk endeavour,
We 'll cherish wit, and scorn their fead or favour;
We 'll strive to bring in active eloquence,
Tho', for a while, upon our fame's expence:—
I 'm wrang—our fame will mount with mettled carles,
And for the rest, we 'll be aboon their snarls.
Knock down the fools, wha dare with empty rage
Spit in the face of virtue and the stage!
'Cause heretics in pulpits thump and rair,
Must nathing orthodox b' expected there?

(1) [* See Life, p. 31, *ante*.]

Because a Rump cut off a royal head,
Must not anither parli'ment succeed?
Thus tho' the drama 's aft debauch'd and rude,
Must we, for some are bad, refuse the good!
Answer me that!—if there be ony log,
That 's come to keek upon us here incog.
Anes! twice! thrice!—But now I think on 't, stay,
I 've something else to do, and must away.
This prologue was design'd for use and sport,
The chiel that made it, let him answer for 't.

AN EPILOGUE

AFTER THE ACTING OF 'THE DRUMMER.'

Our plays are done—now criticise and spare not;
And tho' you are not fully pleas'd, we care not.
We have a reason on our side, and that is,
Your treat has one good property,—'tis gratis.
We 've pleas'd ourselves; and, if we have good judges,
We value not a head where nothing lodges.
The generous men of sense will kindly praise us,
And, if we make a little snapper, raise us.
Such know the aspiring soul at manly dawn,
Abhors the sour rebuke and carping thrawn;
But rises on the hope of a great name,
Up all the rugged roads that lead to fame.
Our breasts already pant to gain renown
At senates, courts, by arms, or by the gown;
Or by improvements of paternal fields,
Which never-failing joy and plenty yields;
Or by deep draughts of the Castalian springs,
To soar with Mantuan or Horatian wings.

Hey boys! the day 's our ain! The ladies smile;
Which over-recompenses all our toil.
Delights of mankind! tho' in some small parts
We are deficient, yet our wills and hearts
Are yours; and, when more perfect, shall endeavour,
By acting better, to secure your favour.
To spinnets then retire, and play a few tunes,
'Till we get thro' our Gregories and Newtons;
And, some years hence, we 'll tell another tale;
'Till then, ye bonny blooming buds, farewell.

A PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY ANTHONY ASTON, (1)

THE FIRST NIGHT OF HIS ACTING IN WINTER 1726.

'Tis I, dear Caledonians, blythsome Tony,
That oft, last winter, pleas'd the brave and bonny,
With medley, merry song, and comic scene:
Your kindness then has brought me here again,
After a circuit round the queen of isles,
To gain your friendship and approving smiles.
Experience bids me hope:—Tho' south the Tweed,
The dastards said, "He never will succeed!
What! such a country look for any good in!
That does not relish plays, nor pork, nor pudding!"
Thus great Columbus, by an idiot crew,
Was ridicul'd at first for his just view;
Yet his undaunted spirit ne'er gave ground,
'Till he a new and better world had found.

(1) Commonly called Tony Aston. He was bred an attorney, and afterwards became a strolling player of considerable powers in low comedy. He wrote a comedy called 'Love in a Hurry,' in 1709.

So I, laugh on. The simile is bold;
But faith 'tis just! for, 'till this body 's cold,
Columbus like, I 'll push for fame and gold.

A PROLOGUE

BEFORE THE ACTING OF 'AURENZEBE,' AT HADDINGTON SCHOOL, IN 1727.

Be hush, ye crowd, who pressing round appear
Only to stare! We speak to those can hear
The nervous phrase, which raises thoughts more high,
When added action leads them thro' the eye.
To paint fair virtue, humours, and mistakes,
Is what our school with pleasure undertakes;
Thro' various incidents of life, led on,
By Dryden and immortal Addison:
These study'd men, and knew the various springs,
That mov'd the minds of coachmen, and of kings.
Altho' we 're young, allow no thought so mean,
That any here 's to act the Harlequin;
We leave such dumb-show mimicry to fools,
Beneath the sp'rit of Caledonian schools.
Learning 's our aim, and all our care to reach
At elegance and gracefulness of speech;
And the address, from bashfulness refin'd,
Which hangs a weight upon a worthy mind.
The grammar 's good, but pedantry brings down
The gentle dunce below the sprightly clown.
"Get seven score verse of Ovid's Trist by heart,
To rattle o'er, else I shall make ye smart!"
Cry snarling dominies that little ken:—
Such may teach parrots, but our Lesly (1) men.

(1) Mr. John Lesly, master of the school of Haddington; a gentleman of true learning, who, by his excellent method, most worthily fills his place.

AN EPILOGUE

SPOKEN AFTER ACTING 'THE ORPHAN' AND 'THE GENTLE SHEPHERD', IN JANUARY 1729.

Patie speaks.

Life's but a farce at best; and we to-day
Have shewn you how the different stations play.
Each palace is a stage, each cot the same;
And lords and shepherds differ but in name.
In every sphere like passions rule the soul,
And love, and rage, and grief, and joy, the whole.
In these they tally:—Yet our fables show
There 's oft vast odds betwixt high life and low;
For artful guile, ambition, hate, and pride,
Give less disturbance to the inferior side;
Monimia falls,—while Peggy on the plain
Enjoys her wishes with her faithful swain.
Thus we can moralize:—The end 's design'd,
To firm our look, and brighten up the mind;
To please our beauteous audience, and improve
Our art of speech, with all the force to move.
We 'll sing the rest.—Come knight, and partner fair,
Let 's close our entertainment with an air!

Patie sings.

(To the tune of 'Bessy Bell.')

Thus, let us study day and night,
To fit us for our station,
That when we 're men, we parts may play,
Are useful to our nation.

CHORUS.

For now 's the time, when we are young,
To fix our views on merit,
Water its buds, and make the tongue
And action suit the spirit.

Peggy sings.

This all the fair and wise approve,
We know it by your smiling;
And while we gain respect and love,
Our studies are not toiling.

CHORUS.

Such application gives delight,
And in the end proves gainful;
'Tis but the dull and lifeless wight
Thinks labour hard and painful!

Sir William sings.

Then never let us think our time
And care, when thus employ'd,
Are thrown away; but deem 't a crime
When youth 's by sloth destroy'd.

CHORUS.

'Tis only active souls can rise
To fame, and all that 's splendid;
And favourites of these conquering eyes,
'Gainst whom no heart 's defended.

END OF VOL. I.

BINDING LIST MAR 15 1949
FL. 31-3-49

PR
3657
A1
1848
v.1

Ramsay, Allan
Works

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY